

Micol Kates

# Towards a Vegan-Based Ethic

Dismantling Neo-Colonial Hierarchy  
Through an Ethic of Lovingkindness



PETER LANG  
PROMPT

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“I did not become a vegetarian for my health, I did it for the health of the chickens.”

Isaac Bashevis Singer

To Livy, Loki, Snuffy and Punim

This book is dedicated to everyone who chooses the difficult paths, who choose to dedicate their lives to doing and not trying. I dedicate this work to all vegan activists who are choosing veganism not because it's on trend, but because brutality should never be the answer.



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# Foreword

I first met the author of this volume when she took a graduate course towards her Master's degree from me. Throughout our work together, we established that we shared a common interest in animal advocacy and a common belief that using animals in the service of our own interests in a modern, industrialized society is seriously, ethically flawed and problematic on many levels. This shared passion led to many interesting conversations, and eventually, when Micol was ready to embark on the final project for her Master's degree, she approached me to supervise her. Certainly, this is not my usual area of academic study—I am a Classicist by trade (of all things!)—but a large part of my work does rely on an appreciation of critical theory and theoretical issues, particularly in relation to race and gender in the study of the past, both of which represent historically silenced perspectives. The critical study of animal issues is emerging today, much like race and gender, as a realm of such serious academic discourse. Still, however, it remains relegated to the sidelines of academia, much like feminist critical theory was in universities prior to the 1970s. Critical animal studies have yet to attract a great deal of attention on an institutional

level, although the signs are that there is progress being made in this direction. Still, few universities have faculty who work in this area as a mainstay of their research, and given the pressing need for such research, and the shortage of “experts” to supervise it, we both decided that my lifelong interest in the issues involved and the ideals of animal advocacy made me as good a choice of supervisor as any. Perhaps unorthodox and less than ideal in some ways, the arrangement seemed to work well for both of us, and Micol went on to create a tour de force ethical manifesto which utilized both her considerable writing talents and her astonishing and deeply moving work as a visual artist. Rather than simply researching and compiling data, Micol’s work generates new knowledge and new ways of knowing, which are certainly going to be vital to our own human well-being if we hope to adapt to the changing realities of life on a planet Earth that simply cannot sustain us in the fashion to which we have become accustomed. Since our work together, Micol has continued to be a vocal proponent of the need to change violent practices to which we have become numb and willfully blind, and this book is a reflection of her ongoing dedication to and passion for that purpose. I was thrilled to hear that this book was being published, and I was very pleased and honoured to be asked to write this foreword.

Micol’s work takes a look at the attitudes and practices of neo-colonialism and applies them in new and perhaps unsettling ways. Typically used as a theoretical approach to study human interactions with other humans, Micol extends the net to talk about human interactions with other species. She argues that the same attitudes and practices of “othering” that appear in the colonial mind-set and literature are simply perpetuated in neo-colonial practice, and that this lens can be applied to help consider not only inequitable human interactions, but also human and non-human interactions.

The idea that the silent “other” might be worthy of ethical consideration is not new, but the idea that this “other” need not be human in order to warrant sympathy has still not entered the mainstream mind-set. Progress is being made—in an era where an orangutan has been granted human rights status and Canada has finally banned adding new whales and dolphins to marine exhibits staged as “entertainment”,

one gets the sense that we are witnessing the beginning of a shift away from the neo-colonial hierarchy that says non-humans only have value when they serve human needs or desires. In support of this, Micol presents a heartfelt and highly logical challenge to that traditional structure and forces us to reconsider what many of us still take to be “natural facts” about human dominion. She frames the argument as a paradigmatic shift from an “Ego”-based model to an “Eco”-based one.

This book will make some people uncomfortable, and this is a good thing. Until we have an actual incentive to change practices of exploitation, we tend not to do it. For many of us, this only comes about when we finally connect with an issue on a gut level. This visceral reaction can be painful to process, and denial is certainly the easier course, in the short term. But denial is not sustainable in the long term, environmentally, ethically or personally. If this book gets “under people’s skins”, it means we are reacting to the discomfort that the suffering of other sentient beings causes us. We might try to suppress it, but we are by nature an empathetic species. We have taught ourselves to override these more humane impulses, but we do so at a terrible cost. This is suffering of which we do not like to be reminded. It is suffering that most of us would likely turn away from, were it right before us. Even as the North American market and retail food chains are ramping up sales of plant-based meat substitutes, they are (for the most part) promoting them on the basis of their environmental benefits and their perceived health benefits to the consumer. Their obvious benefits to the sentient beings used to produce meat is left out of the equation. Thus far, such plant-based foods have been marketed to appeal to the consumer’s self-interest and concern for our own species’ long-term survival on the planet, but even in this, there is hope for a growing awareness of the meat industry’s cost to animals. As people become more accustomed to accepting alternative products and realize that they do not have to “sacrifice” anything in forgoing meat, perhaps they will also, in time, become more receptive to the idea that not exploiting animals is also the right thing to do, and that the well-being and best interests of other species matter just as much as those of our own. In this case, we are in a mutually reinforcing loop: care for ourselves, care for our environment and care for other species all interconnect in a way that can be

beneficial to all. In extending our network of concern, we realize our own better natures and actualize our potential as ethical, conscientious inhabitants of planet Earth. This book is a step towards that goal. It is important and has never been timelier. I have no doubt that you will find much to think about in the following pages, and I sincerely hope that you will find them as compelling as I do.

Dr. Lisa Micheelsen  
Athabasca University  
Alberta, Canada  
November 2019

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# Introduction—Towards a Vegan Ethic

Those who are against Fascism without being against capitalism, who lament over the barbarism that comes out of barbarism, are like people who wish to eat their veal without slaughtering the calf. They are willing to eat the calf, but they dislike the sight of blood.

Bertolt Brecht, *Writing the Truth: Five Difficulties*.

This work will demonstrate the pivotal role that *veganistic* (my word)—in contrast to humanistic, principles and vegan-based ethics play in industries where animals have been and continue to be used for people's comfort. Offering a critique of a neo-colonial theoretical perspective will demonstrate the need for a greater awareness of animal rights and vegan-based ethics. Within the patriarchal social model, colonialism, and its contemporary counterpart, neo-colonialism create hierarchies of "us" and "them": the exploiters and the exploited. It is useful to draw salient parallels between the treatment of non-humans and the ways in which colonialism has been used and continues to be used in contemporary neo-colonialism to oppress *othered* people. Othered, a term used by Ashcroft, et al. in *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, refers to anyone who has been pushed to the margins by those who occupy central positions of power (155). This work examines three areas that are becoming more reflective of the need for vegan-based ethics namely, farming and food production, scientific "experimentation", and animals used for "entertainment". Three important examples are used to highlight issues of colonial subjugation of people that parallel



the experiences of animal beings. These are the American prison industrial complex (PIC), African American Pullman Porters, and the nazi<sup>1</sup> concentration camps which allowed for “scientific experimentation” to be conducted on both humans who were not considered as having any worth, as well as on non-human animals. Vegan ethics are guiding principles of respect that seek to redress the imbalances of power in the relationships humans have with animals. In our daily lives and practices, choosing plant-based food, adopting animal companions—instead of buying, and living as respectfully with the Earth as possible, are viable ways of creating a real shift in the emerging vegan paradigm.

## Note

1. I have chosen to write the word “nazi” using lower case letters in order to not give any form of respect to this hate-filled, evil mongering group.

# Understanding Colonialism, Neo-colonialism and Post-colonialism and Their Relationship to the Eco and Ego Models

We found new uses for animal parts in plastics, detergents, tires, cosmetics, dyes, contraceptives, crayons, and more. This went hand-in hand with our portrayals of them as “dumb animals,” making it easier to overlook their abuse and ignore their manifold social and emotional lives. Only animal behaviors with an economic impact merited attention. For example, factories had to deal with the tendency of animals to injure others or themselves when forced to stand in cramped feedlots in ankle-deep excrement, or when packed in tiny cages. (Arora 28)

Before one can contemplate what veganism is and where vegan-based ethics falls in the spectrum of consciousness and the animal rights movement, it is imperative to understand the distinctions between neo-colonialism in contrast to post-colonialism. This distinction is relevant in order to understand the heart of colonial hierarchies and their values, and how these systems represent the antithesis of veganism. Veganism is a way of being in the world that seeks to do no harm to others—humans, animals and the Earth. Neo-colonialism is the antithesis of veganism. Neo-colonialism asserts a type of domination within a framework of top-down rule, and does not, in any way,

regard veganism as having any worth. Colonial dominion is predicated on the belief that only a few, worthy people can rule over the many below them. Viewing the world through the lens of a post-colonial perspective allows for a re-interpretation, or even a re-positioning of the traditional power structure.

Neo-colonialism is a continuation of colonial rule. Neo-colonialism falls within the parameters of the patriarchal model, which, Eisler has named a *dominator social model*. In a neo-colonial society, the rulers are no longer the original occupiers, such as the Europeans, but are instead the local people, the formerly occupied, who have become part of the colonial ruling structure. As Yew succinctly posits in his essay, "Political Discourse- Theories of Colonialism and Postcolonialism," neo-colonialism is a continuation of imperial rule, which has "... continued control of former colonies through ruling native elites compliant with neo-colonial powers ..." (1). Nkrumah speaks about the firm grip that neo-colonialism still maintains on countries that were formerly under the colonial yoke. Nkrumah, a former prime minister of Ghana is remembered for being "... an international symbol of freedom as the leader of the first Black African country to shake off the chains of colonial rule" (Kwame Nkrumah's Vision). Nkrumah warns against the iniquities of neo-colonialism in his text, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. Nkrumah, in the subsequent excerpt, views neo-colonialism as more overtly violent than its predecessor, colonialism:

Neo-colonialism is ... the worst form of imperialism. For those who practise it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress. In the days of old-fashioned colonialism, the imperial power had at least to explain and justify at home the actions it was taking abroad. In the colony, those who served the ruling imperial power could at least look to its protection against any violent move by their opponents. With neo-colonialism neither is the case. (xi)

In contrast to neo-colonialism, post-colonialism is a political reclaiming of power, culture and voice by those who were invaded. In their text, *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics*, Gilbert and Tompkins give a concise definition of the binary nature of post-colonialism,

“Post-colonialism’s agenda ... to dismantle the hegemonic boundaries that create unequal relations of power based on binary oppositions such as ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘first world and third world’, ‘white and black’, and ‘coloniser and colonised’ ” (3).

In neo-colonial systems, cultures and countries were colonized by invaders in ways that robbed the people of their heritage and ways of knowing and being. Once the colonizers left, members of the indigenous communities became the rulers and created a divide and conquer system from within. In order to free themselves from colonial ways, people living in post-colonial societies reclaim their voices through creative expressions such as forms of art and writing, including plays, prose and poetry. These art forms allow for people, whose cultures have been overtaken, to “write back” (Ashcroft et al.) from the margins to the centre. As Ashcroft et al. assert in their valuable text on post-colonial voices, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, the act of “writing back” entails a paradigmatic shift—one that gives voice and power to devalued people who had once been relegated to the bottom of the colonial hierarchy. Countries that were bound by the yoke of colonial rule are reclaiming their traditions, languages and histories through their distinctive forms of writing. The authors explain what makes post-colonial writing unique:

What each of these literatures has in common beyond their special and distinctive regional characteristics is that they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this, which makes them distinctively post-colonial. (Ashcroft et al. 2)

While post-coloniality allows for a “writing back” through voice and language by people who were colonized, animals have no way to speak for themselves in order to claim a space. Embracing vegan-based ethics allows for animals to be heard and respected so that their lives have meaning, beyond being someone’s meal, test experiment or a mode of entertainment.



## A Brief Definition of the Ego and Eco Models

There are two primary social models of understanding and relating to the world. The first is called the Ego Model, which is an integral part of the existing patriarchal model. The other is called the Eco Model, which represents the paradigm shift towards a new social order. The Ego Model represents the outdated, harm-based ideologies of patriarchy, which has existed for more than four thousand years (Lerner). The Ego Model is represented by the traditional patriarchal pyramid and is depicted with a man at the top dominating all other forms of life, including woman [Figure 2.1]. The Ego Model, in which humans are valued above all other beings, justifies dominating as well as killing other beings for food. Meat-eating, colonialism, and its contemporary, neo-colonialism, go hand-in-hand in perpetuating the Ego Model. The Ego Model promotes the subjugation of another—a powerless being, in order to ensure that a hierarchy of dominance is the rule. Within its scope, blind acceptance of situations that are callous, cruel and barbaric is the norm. Were meat-eaters to question how a cow feels moments before she is slaughtered, the mindless consumption of other animals might be reduced.

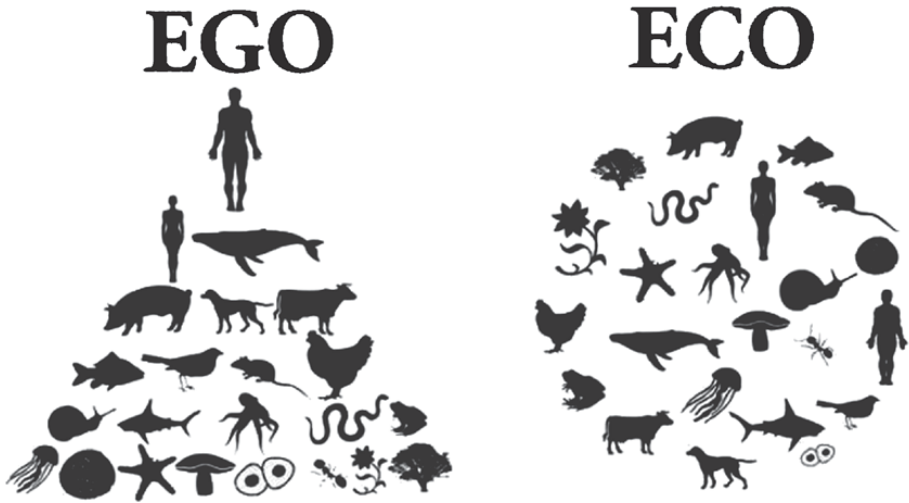


Figure 2.1: Eco and Ego Models.

Source: "EGO vs ECO." *Sustainability*, <https://recyclingsustainability4a.weebly.com/ego-vs-eco.html>.

In contrast, the emergent Eco Model, derived from the word "ecology", is represented by a circle, or a *heterarchy* [Figure 2.1]. The term "heterarchy" has been in existence for over 60 years and denotes a relationship between and among all beings where no one being has dominance. Initially, heterarchy was used to discuss the concept of networks within the field of systems theory relating to cybernetics (Von Goldhammer et al. 3). Today, heterarchy is used to talk about how "... organizations embody a shift away from the top-down hierarchical model into a shared-power, equalized organizational model" (Schumacher 43). The circle, or heterarchy that the Eco Model embraces, is one where women, fish, men, trees and all other forms of life are part of the interconnectivity of life. In the Eco Model, humans no longer hold a position of dominance over other beings. In other words, humanity does not act as a supreme force, but is simply another form of being within the web of life. Moreover, in the Eco Model, the mass killing of other beings for food which occurs on factory farms, and in the use of animals for entertainment, clothing, and scientific experiments can no longer be justified.

# Shamanic Clowns, Fools and Children

## Shifting the Paradigm

Hans Christian Andersen's parable, *The Emperor's New Clothes* illustrates the blind and mindless acceptance of the absurd to which all, but a young child is willing to close their eyes. In the story, the Emperor has allowed two travelling weavers to trick him into believing they are making him beautiful, new clothes for him, when in fact, they are making nothing. The travelling weavers are simply taking the Emperor's money and spinning lies, not cloth. When the Emperor dons the new "clothes" in public, all the sycophantic adults praise his beautiful attire. The only person in the audience with open eyes, not taken in by the deceit, is a small child whose courage to speak up encourages the adults to do the same. The young child can plainly see that the Emperor is wearing nothing at all, and is not afraid to say just that:

"But he has nothing on at all," said a little child. "Good heavens! Hear what the little innocent says!" said the father; and then each whispered to each other what the child said. "He has no clothes on—a little child says he has nothing on at all!" "He has nothing on at all," cried all the people at last. (254–255)



Often, young children can be likened to the role of the trickster, fool or clown found in many cultural narratives throughout the world. The trickster, fool or clown is able to mirror back unacceptable behaviours in society in a way that makes people uncomfortable, while causing them to reflect on their actions. McGee, in his article, “The Path of the Sacred Clown: Where Tricksters and Shamans Converge”, discusses the role of the shaman or sacred clown:

The main function of a sacred clown is to deflate the ego of power by reminding those in power of their own fallibility, while also reminding those who are not in power that power has the potential to corrupt if not balanced with other forces, namely with humor. But sacred clowns don't out-rightly deride things. They're not comedians, per se, though they can be. They are more like tricksters, poking holes in things that people take too seriously. (1–2)

Like the trickster, fool and clown, a young child is often able to ask questions that adults have been conditioned not to consider. Young children are more likely to see wrongs that are occurring and speak out against them. Most adults have been conditioned to close their eyes and hearts to what should be deemed unacceptable to all, not just to some. By and large, children are taught that violence is wrong, and fighting is not the way; yet, in meat-eating households, the bodies of animals are fed to children without question.

It is because many conscious people have chosen never to close their eyes and hearts to the suffering of animals that the vegan movement was born. Veganism is a growing, worldwide movement committed to creating respect for both animals, also called non-human animals or other animals, and the humans who support them. As a movement, veganism seeks to dismantle the old guard philosophy of the Ego Model, which places, and still perceives humans, specifically men, at the top of the hierarchy.

The Vegan Society, a British organization uses the term “other animals” to refer to animals. Its goal is devoted to teaching people the benefits of becoming vegan. The organization defines veganism thusly:

Veganism represents a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude—as far as is possible and practicable—all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty

to, other animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, other animals and the environment. (Compassion for Animals 1)



## Buddhist Lovingkindness as a Path to Veganism

Much like veganism, whose goal is to do no harm to other beings, the Buddhist concept of *metta*, derived from the ancient language, Pali, translates into English as Lovingkindness. The aim of Lovingkindness, like veganism, is to do no harm. The Pali commentaries also known as the *Tripitaka* are "... the collection of the teachings of the Buddha over 45 years in the Pali language, and it consists of Sutta—conventional teaching, Vinaya—disciplinary code, and Abhidhamma—moral psychology" (Thera 1). In the Tripitaka, all beings, not just human beings, are recognized as having worth. Lovingkindness has eight precepts. As the Pali commentaries show, love and kindness are key:

One loves all beings:

- (a) [B]y the non-harassment of all beings and thus avoids harassment;
- (b) [B]y being inoffensive (to all beings) and thus avoids offensiveness;
- (c) [B]y not torturing (all beings) and thus avoids torturing;

- (d) [B]y the non-destruction (of all life) and thus avoids destructiveness;
- (e) [B]y being non-vexing (to all beings) and thus avoids vexing;
- (f) [B]y projecting the thought, “May all beings be friendly and not hostile”;
- (g) [B]y projecting the thought, “May all beings be happy and not unhappy”;
- (h) [B]y projecting the thought, “May all beings enjoy well-being and not be distressed.” ... In these eight ways one loves all beings; therefore, it is called universal love. (Buddharakkhita 7)

One can recognize that the principles in which veganism and vegan ethics are rooted are the embodied and loving extensions of the Buddhist concept of Lovingkindness. Through the practice of veganism, the eight precepts of Lovingkindness can continue to manifest in the world, whether one is Buddhist and familiar with metta, or not.

## The Ego and Eco Models Further Explained

In a similar vein to Carol J. Adams' *ovic* (my word replacing the word "seminal") thesis, Hawthorne's, *A Vegan Ethic* makes the connection between meat-eating diets and patriarchy, and posits that "[i]n a patriarchal social system, no female-human or other animal—is seen as having ownership of her body" (55). Adams, in her luminary text, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* calls out the heinous, inherent misogyny present in the Ego culture, where the rape of women is comparable to the torturous abuse of female animals in factory farming; a treatment accepted as the norm. Female pigs, as one example, are kept in gestation crates for the short time they are alive in factory farms, also called agri-farms. A gestation crate is a small, metal box, with metal bars, like a cell, in which the pigs are separated from their piglets, save for the slats in the crates.

Milk cows too in factory farming have a sad, brutal fate:

In order to produce profitable amounts of milk, a cow must be impregnated on a yearly basis. Dairy calves are taken away within hours of birth so that humans can drink the milk. Mother cows bellow after their calves when they are taken from them and have even tried to hide their babies. Due to frequent

milking, cows often develop painful udder infections ... The normal lifespan of a cow is twenty years, but modern dairy cows are slaughtered at about five ... (Even if You)

Adams strongly asserts that the violence done to women and the violence that animal beings suffer is directly linked to patriarchy's hate of the feminine. Owing to societal misogyny, Adams avers that a disconnect has taken place—one that sees "... an overlap of cultural images of sexual violence against women and the fragmentation and dismemberment of nature and the body ..." (51). The result of such jarring overlaps, says Adams, is that the dissonance allows for meat eaters to simply see animals as parts, but never as whole beings. The act of "carving" up a dead animal body is the most visceral way to describe and explain the schism that occurs in those who eat the bodies of others:

Of special concern will be the cultural representations of the butchering of animals because meat eating is the most frequent way in which we interact with animals. Butchering is the quintessential enabling act for meat eating. It enacts a literal dismemberment upon animals while proclaiming our intellectual and emotional separation from animals' desire to live. (51)

As mentioned earlier, in contrast to the Ego Model, a new school of thought has created an inclusive model of interconnectivity referred to as the Eco, or ecological model. The Eco Model is not a hierarchy, but a circle. In this circle, all beings, not just human beings, have an equal place. The Eco Model adheres to the principles of Naess' *Deep Ecology*, a term coined in 1972, (Watson 54) stemming "... from the process of deep questioning ..." (Watson 55). Deep Ecology, like the Eco Model, supports an interconnectivity between the Earth, and the beings who inhabit it.

The Eco Model seeks to realign the imbalance of power by shifting the focus away from men, and male-dominance and male forms of violence. In the Eco Model, the focus is on respecting the interconnectivity of all life. This model uses a *veganistic* approach in contrast to the Eco Model's traditional humanistic approach, which perceives the human condition dominated by people, specifically men. The Eco

model, based on a more feminist framework, places value on all beings and understands the importance of interconnectivity.

Arrigoni et al. in their essay, "Until All Are Free" [in the text, *Defining Critical Animal Studies: An Intersectional Social Justice Approach for Liberation*] articulate the need for interconnectivity by adopting vegan-based ethics. Within the new Eco Model movement, Arrigoni, et al. recognize that in order to truly affect change, the system of capitalism, which has created factory farming, needs to be eradicated. The authors use the term, "animal industrial complex" to define how animals are treated like a commodity in industrial, or factory farming—thus creating a parallel to the prison industrial complex: "[b]ecause animal and human oppression and liberation are inseparable, liberation must entail not only abolishing capitalism but also dismantling the animal industrial complex ..." (52).

To this end, vegan-based ethics differs from human ethics. Vegan ethics does not simply serve as a moral compass for humans, but also has the stated aim of creating an ethical compass that works to differentiate itself from the Ego philosophy in two primary ways. Firstly, vegan-based ethics is creating a shift in consciousness by transforming the Ego paradigm and giving voice and respect to the myriad animals that are ceaselessly used in all manner of ways for the so-called betterment of society. Secondly, vegan-based ethics differentiates itself from traditional, human-based ethics by serving as a vehicle for change. Not only are non-human lives respected and valued within this new, ethical framework, so too are the voices and opinions of the people who are choosing to eschew animal consumption in favour of plant-based diets. This way of seeing the world gives veganism and vegan-based ethics the power to challenge and topple the hierarchy of dominance. The patriarchal, top-down rule of governance, formed by the age-old values of privileged, male supremacy, is slowly yielding. In the Eco Model, a new *arch*, or form of governance, is being created. Therefore, the use of my word, "ontarchy" to replace patriarchy as both a word and concept is one such steppingstone towards the paradigm shift. Words greatly influence thinking; hence, using the term "ontarchy" allows for a deeper understanding of the shift in consciousness which is occurring.



The word “ontarchy” is formed from two Greek parts of speech. The Greek prefix, *ónt* meaning “beings” is added to the Greek suffix, *arch* meaning “to rule”. By joining prefix and suffix, not only is a new word created, but so too is a new way of thinking. In an ontarchy, a true paradigm shift can create a new social order. People are not the most important beings in an ontarchy—an idea that is reflected in the term, which is in opposition to patriarchy, or even matriarchy. An ontarchy challenges the notion of (a) needing to be ruled by one significant being, and (b) creates a pluralistic and respectful space for all beings. By changing language to reflect a vegan, inclusive, feminist consciousness, the outmoded and patriarchal pyramid can be toppled.

## Why Veganism? How Veganism Can Topple Neo-colonialism in Theory and Practice

Human-centred ethics provides a sense of direction with respect to people's welfare. Vegan-based ethics gives animals a voice and shifts the paradigm from the Ego to the Eco Model by fostering a philosophy of kindness, rooted in respectful relationships with all beings. In the Ego Model, animals used in science, entertainment and on agri-farms for food are not regarded as beings, but as things. Vegan-based ethics challenges and dismantles outdated ideas, and is essential in creating respect for animals, which includes their living and dying. In this way, an interconnectivity of respect is fostered. Vegan-based ethics are ethical standards that have been established by conscious people in order to respect all beings. Vegan ethics place equal importance on both the words used to describe animals as well as actions taken to live in a vegan-minded way. The primary aim of veganism is to not contribute to anyone's suffering.

A vegan diet, which might preclude buying products—(not only food items)—from companies that are not certified-vegan, changes the balance of power away from the traditional forms of dominance over someone else's life. Veganism's Eco Model does not wish to replicate

the Ego power structure. Vegan-based ethical thinking considers that animal by-products such as eggs, milk and the animals do not exist for people's benefit or consumption, but for themselves. Veganism is shifting the paradigm so that people are changing the ways in which they think about food. To this end, people are reconsidering their relationships with other beings.

Additionally, people are re-evaluating issues of violence used to support a system of dominance, specifically when it is done to others who cannot defend themselves. Most people who eat animals believe that the cows, chickens, sheep, lambs, etc. that they consume are on Earth for the sole purpose of serving people. Likewise, othered people are seen as less important than people who hold the balance of power at the top of the hierarchy. As Ashcroft et al. explain, othered people are people defined by the ruling, colonizing power:

The colonized subject is characterized as 'other' through discourses such as primitivism and cannibalism, as a means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view are relegated to the margins by those in positions of power in the centre. (154–155)

Othered people, in a dominator model, are only valued for their positions of servility. Both non-humans and othered people are routinely placed at the bottom of the Ego hierarchy. The hierarchy of human supremacy has been upheld throughout history. Examples include colonial rule, the Holocaust, female "witch" burnings as well as other forms of mass violence towards women, which I term "gynocides". Additionally, systems of hate, based on skin colour, is another example of the Ego Model. One example is the Jim Crow segregation laws in America that lasted almost one hundred years—from 1877 until the end of the Civil Rights Movement in 1964 (What Was Jim Crow?) and the other is South African apartheid. This system legally lasted for 46 years (Evans) and was officially abolished in 1994, but, say many, is still part of the fabric of the country (Matroos). All of these forms of domination have one primary aim, to try and justify dominion over those on the margins.

In the play, *No Sugar*, indigenous, Australian dramaturge, Jack Davis, identifies the inequalities and racist subjugation of indigenous

Australians by the ruling British, WASP invaders, also referred to as the colonizers. The scene is 1929, Western Australia, and it is ration day, the day when the local, indigenous people are forced to beg at the Office of the Chief Protector of Aborigines for basic supplies. Two local, indigenous women have gone to the Office to get their weekly essentials that include meat and soap. The women are a mother and her adult daughter who, together, have a large family. The older of the two women, who is a mother as well as a grandmother, is only referred to as Gran by the colonial invaders, and not by her formal title, Mrs. Munday. The practice of calling invaded people by their first names was upheld everywhere by all who supported colonialism's racist values. In the following excerpt, the two women are met with condescension and derision by the Sergeant at the Office:

**SERGEANT:** There's your butcher's order, meat and dripping.

...

**GRAN:** Damper won't rise without no bicarbonate.

**SERGEANT:** That shouldn't worry you Granny, you should remember when you used to grind up jam and wattle seeds.

**GRAN:** More better than white man's flour, no weevils in jam and wattle seeds.

...

**SERGEANT:** You can still collect 'em, nothin' stoppin' you.

**GRAN:** Where? Wetjala cut all the trees down.

**MILLY:** Haven't got any soap yet.

**SERGEANT:** I'm afraid that soap is no longer included as a ration item.

**MILLY:** What do you mean, we got no more soap?

**SERGEANT:** That's right.

**MILLY:** But why? What am I going to wash with? How can I keep my kids clean and sen' 'em to school?

**SERGEANT:** You could buy some.

**MILLY:** With what? (190)

In the above passage, the paternalistic and racist tones employed by the white colonizer/ invader are not covert. Indeed, the indigenous people, who are possibly treated worse than animals, are reduced to a position of servility; being forced to beg to live, even for meat that traditionally would have been hunted and eaten by a family.



# Animals as Food

## Farming Practices and Food Production

To raise efficiency and cut costs, farm animals began to be engineered for abnormally rapid weight gain, fed unnatural corn-based diets that cause metabolic disorders and liver damage, and injected with pre-emptive antibiotics and growth hormones. To reduce fights and injuries due to overcrowding, animals began to be routinely mutilated—for instance, their beaks, horns, or tails might be chopped or burned off without anesthesia—and they were often confined in tiny crates in windowless rooms. All of these procedures are now standard and legal. As with so many aspects of our economy, the full cost of this enterprise, whether ethical, environmental, or health-wise, has never been factored in. (Arora 28)

Arora provides readers with a glimpse at the driving forces behind the mega farm: greed and capitalism. Adams', *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, makes a quietly haunting dedication to the shocking number of animals farmed for human consumption, "[i]n memory of 31.1 billion each year, 85.2 million each day, 3.5 million each hour, 59,170 each minute." Adams' dedication is an eerie reminder that non-human animals' lives and deaths are inextricably linked to every aspect of human lives. More current data shows the number of animals slaughtered is now upwards of 70 billion animals yearly.

The reality of how animals are treated on factory farms, also called agri-farms, mega-farms, or industrial farms, is distressing and inhumane. On a factory farm, the animals are seen as a means to an end. Pluhar in her essay, "Meat and Morality: Alternatives to Factory Farming" addresses the conditions that animals face in the "industrial farming complex" (Arrigoni et al. 52). Pluhar asserts that "[i]ntensive confinement and mechanized production" (456) are the realities of life for farmed animals on factory farms. Pollan too goes into great detail about the inhumane housing and living conditions in which factory-farmed animals exist:

To visit a modern CAFO (Confined Animal Feeding Operation) is to enter a world that ... is still designed according to Cartesian principles: animals are machines incapable of feeling pain ... Beef cattle in America at least still live outdoors, albeit standing ankle deep in their own waste eating a diet that makes them sick. And broiler chickens, although they do get their beaks snipped off with a hot knife to keep them from cannibalizing one another under the stress of the confinement, at least don't spend their eight-week lives in cages too small to ever stretch a wing. That fate is reserved for the American laying hen, who passes her brief span piled together with a-half dozen other hens in a wire cage whose floor a single page of this magazine could carpet. (63)

Pollan's, "An Animal's Place", sums up the role that capitalism plays in the agribusiness sector, "[m]ore than any other institution, the American animal industrial farm offers a nightmarish glimpse of what capitalism can look like in the absence of moral or regulatory constraint" (63). The "nightmarish glimpse" that Pollan speaks of is made visible in Adams' dedication, and in the understanding that the agribusiness farming model is one that sees animal beings as a product from which to make profit, nothing more.

Bisgould et al. document the cruelty that farmed animals in Canada endure in their report, *Anything Goes: An Overview of Canada's Legal Approach to Animals on Factory Farms*, prepared by Animal Alliance of Canada. Bisgould et al. show disdain for the practices of animal cruelty that exists on agri-farms, for animals on the way to slaughterhouses, and the cruelty practised at slaughterhouses. The authors counter the

attitudes of the factory farming industry, by showing respect for the animals for which they are advocating by referring to them as “other animals” (Bisgould et al. 2). Additionally, the authors cite Kunstler, who likens the conditions that factory-farmed animals must suffer, to the conditions that Black American slaves endured:

The ultimate consumer of the veal, pork, chicken and eggs simply has no more conception of what went on before these neatly packaged farm products arrived at the retail level than the purchaser of Civil War clothing had of the conditions under which enslaved black hands planted and picked the cotton from which its threads were made. (3)

In Canada, reports the animal advocacy organization, Animal Justice, “... more than 750 million animals” were killed for food in 2015 (*Canadians Killed More*). Animal Justice advocates on behalf of animals by seeking to make changes in outdated laws that do not serve animals. The report, *Anything Goes*, by Bisgould et al underscores the fact that many provinces in Canada have no laws that safeguard farmed animals at all. As the authors explain, Canada has rules that regulate the transport of animals to be killed, but no enforced laws regulating the care of the animal while living on the mega-farm:

Canada has regulations on the transport of animals to slaughter and on what happens in the abattoirs themselves. But relentless budget cuts and a government distaste for regulation have led to limited enforcement of the rules on the treatment of live animals ... The agriculture industry has not been the subject of shrewd government scrutiny. Instead, it has become a collection of clients for whom the rules are tailored and from whom fees are collected. (5)

Singer’s influential book, *Animal Liberation*, discusses the various ways in which animals are continuously used for human gain. Farming, Singer pointedly asserts, has gone from “agriculture to agribusiness” (96). The business of farming has gone from conscientious work done on a small scale by farming families, to big corporations running all aspects of farming practices. Media images would still like the public to believe otherwise—that farming is a bucolic and genteel pastime activity carried out by “simple country folk” (Singer 96), who treat the animals they are raising with respect and dignity. The corporations that



have taken over the practice of farming are, more than likely, not run by people with farming backgrounds, nor with a respect for the animals and land they are caring for, but by people interested in making the most money in the fastest ways possible. In the subsequent excerpt from, *Animal Liberation*, Singer outlines the ways in which factory farming seeks to get results:

The big corporations and those who must compete with them are not concerned with a sense of harmony, among plants, animals and nature. Farming is competitive and the methods adopted are those that cut costs and increase production. So farming is now "factory farming." Animals are treated like machines that turn low priced fodder into high priced flesh, and any innovation will be used if it results in a cheaper "conversion ration." (97)

Pollan's detailed and unvarnished description of the fate of incarcerated animal beings on factory farms is difficult to read, and hard to fathom. Apart from addressing the squalor that chickens and cows are forced to live in, Pollan also discusses the living conditions of pigs, and explains the psychological term "learned helplessness" (63) as applied to confined pigs. *Learned helplessness*, says Pollan, is common among those who are confined. Pigs in a factory farming business are ripped from their mothers very prematurely. As a result, the pain of being taken so young from one's mother leaves the piglets with a need to latch on to someone or something for comfort:

Piglets in confinement operations are weaned from their mothers at 10 days after birth (compared with 13 weeks in nature) because they gain weight faster on their hormone—and antibiotic-fortified feed. This premature weaning leaves the pigs with a lifelong craving to suck and chew, a desire they gratify in confinement by biting the tail of the animal in front of them. A normal pig would fight off his molester, but a demoralized pig has stopped caring. (Pollan 63)

The picture of factory farming painted by Bisgould et al., and others such as Pollan, Adams and Pluhar is one that differs vastly from the image that is fed to the public. In fact, Pluhar exposes the truth behind the idea of humanely fed and raised farmed animals in the United States:

[C]onsider what the Food and Drug Administration allows as protein in feed for poultry, pigs, and other non-cattle: cattle blood, brains, and spinal cords of cattle not older than 30 months, restaurant plate waste, and used poultry litter. Tissues from cows who die before slaughter or who are “downers” were also permitted until U. S. President Obama, in response to record E Coli [sic] food poisonings, declared that there would be a ban on their slaughter ... (457)

The above excerpt illustrates how, in factory farming, there is no such thing as “humane” treatment. In American factory farms, along with the fetid “food” animals are fed, they are forced to stand in their feces, confined to tiny cages, and then killed—and not quickly or painlessly. The American animal rights organization, Vegan Outreach, in a pamphlet-style report titled, “Canadian—Even if You Like Meat”, explains how animals in Canada are treated on factory farms and in slaughterhouses. The following excerpt describes, in graphic detail, what is permissible on Canadian factory farms:

Federal law requires mammals be stunned prior to slaughter (exempting kosher and halal, which generally require animals be fully conscious as their necks are cut). Typically, electric current is used to induce a heart attack and/or seizure; or a captive bolt gun is used to deliver a blow to the skull or shoot a rod into the animal’s brain. It’s not uncommon for an animal to suffer one or two failed stuns. In the case of a failed electrical stun, an animal may be paralyzed without losing sensibility. Unconscious animals whose necks are not cut soon enough may regain their senses after being hung [sic] on the bleed rail. (6)

One wonders if meat and animal by-product consumption would decrease if slaughterhouses had glass walls. Arora, in his provoking essay, “On Eating Animals”, discusses the comparisons between factory-farmed animals and the Holocaust’s concentration camps. Arora states:

It’s more likely that we don’t want to know—can’t afford to know for our own sake—so we turn a blind eye and trust the artifice of bucolic imagery on meat packaging. Some see parallels here with the German people’s wilful denial of the concentration camps that once operated around them or call those who

consume factory-farmed meat little Eichmanns. "For the animals, it is an eternal Treblinka," wrote Isaac Bashevis Singer ... (30)

Making a comparison between the plight of farmed beings and people forced to toil and often perish as happened in the nazi concentration camps undoubtedly makes many very uneasy and upset. This analogy speaks to the fact that people would rather remain blind to the realities of modern food production as on factory farms, than confront their food's face. Indeed, this type of sanctioned blindness allows for a perpetuation of speciesism through a hierarchy of human domination.

## Factory Farming and the American Prison Industrial Complex (PIC)

A strong comparison can be made between factory farming and the American prison industrial complex (PIC). Arrigoni et al. use the term “animal industrial complex” (52) to liken the treatment of animals on factory farms to the American prison system. Indeed, the PIC and the animal industrial complex are seemingly similar.

The current American prison system, which is a for-profit industry, was created in the era of President Ronald Regan (Pelaez 5). Pelaez’s essay, “The Prison Industry in the United States: Big Business or a New Form of Slavery?” discusses the process by which the prison system in America has become increasingly privatized, as a work-for-profit labour camp. Pelaez asserts, “[p]rivate prisons are the biggest business in the prison industry complex” (5). During slavery, people were used as free labour. The tradition of getting free or almost free labour has continued since the abolishment of slavery when “... a system of “hiring out prisoners” was introduced in order to continue the slavery tradition” (3). Charges would be levied against freed “slaves” for committing “crimes” such as “... not carrying out their sharecropping commitments ... or petty thievery—which were almost never proven—and

were then “hired out” for cotton picking, working in mines and building railroads” (3). More than half of the prisoners in the southern states that were “hired-out” from “1870 until 1910” (3) were Black; this was not a coincidence by any means.

After the Civil War era, institutionalized racism was introduced. Along with the Jim Crow segregationist laws, the foundation for the privatization of the PIC was born. As a result, the rates of incarceration for people of colour are much higher than for non-melanated people, underscoring the fact that the PIC is a new form of slavery. Guo posits that within the American PIC “... a far higher fraction of black men—7.7%, or 580,000 people—are institutionalized. Now, the racial gap starts to look like a racial chasm. (When you take into account local jails, which are not included in these statistics, the situation could be even worse)” (2). Systemic racism is indeed a scourge and regards melanated people as less than human.

The aim of the modern, for-profit prison industrial complex is not to rehabilitate the imprisoned, but to gain free labour. Similarly, agribusiness uses enslaved animal beings in a for-profit industry. According to Vegan Outreach, animals in factory farms are not regarded as beings, but as machines. In factory farms, animals are used and abused; forced to lay eggs, give birth to babies, and have their milk stolen so profits can be made. In fact, “[i]n the September 1976 issue of the industry journal, *Hog Farm Management*, John Byrnes advised: “Forget the pig is an animal. Treat him just like a machine in a factory” (*Factory Farming* 5).”

Incarcerated people in modern America’s prison system suffer a similar fate to animals on factory farms. Both are routinely abused. Prisoners in the American PIC system are paid slave wages, receiving “... as little as 17 cents per hour for a maximum of six hours a day, the equivalent of \$20 per month. The highest-paying private prison is CCA in Tennessee, where prisoners receive 50 cents per hour for what they call “highly skilled positions” (Pelaez 4).” More than half of the 50 states in the United States “... have legalized the contracting of prison labor by private corporations that mount their operations inside state prisons ...” (Pelaez 4). Big corporations, such as Revlon, Macy’s, and Nordstrom, and even tech companies prefer prison labour because it is cheap (Pelaez 4). In fact, a Texas factory “... fired its 150 workers and

contracted the services of prison-workers from the private Lockhart Texas prison, where circuit boards are assembled for companies like IBM and Compaq” (Pelaez 4). These practices are reminiscent of how the nazis used prisoners as slave labour in their factories, without pay.

The fate of imprisoned people is similar to that of farmed non-human animals in that they have both been stripped of their rights and agency. Hierarchical enslavement of “others” is a big business. Prisons, factory farms, and even educational institutions all work on similar principles. By establishing a hierarchy of dominance through fear and torture, those in charge are able to ensure that obedience is the guiding framework that keeps those at the bottom in positions of servility. In order to keep the hierarchy of dominance functioning, false rewards are provided, such as the possibility of release from prison, only to be re-arrested on more false charges. For non-human animals, a false reward is letting babies suckle with their mothers for one hour, or a few days, before the family is violently and permanently separated.

Heinzen and Russ examine the speciesist<sup>1</sup> slant of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), an American law designed to protect animals. In their article, “Using Emerging Pollution Tracking Methods to Address the Downstream Impacts of Factory Farm Animal Welfare Abuse”, Heinzen and Russ, in a similar vein to Bisgould et al. who examine Canada’s antiquated and lax laws governing the slaughter of farmed animals, discuss the ways in which the AWA selectively represents some, but not all animals, including “livestock”—a word designed to remove emotion from the connection to the animal:

The Animal Welfare Act is the primary federal law meant to prohibit animal cruelty, yet its definition of “animal” expressly excludes all birds and livestock animals. The Humane Slaughter Act only regulates slaughter practices and therefore provides no animal welfare protections on the farm. To make matters worse, the law’s implementing agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has inexplicably determined that the law’s limited protections of “livestock” do not extend to poultry. Poultry comprise more than 95% of non-fish farmed animals raised in the United States. As a result, our federal laws provide no protections against animal cruelty on the factory farm, even though farmed animals represent a staggering 98% of domesticated animals in the country. (479–480)

If the law does not care about the fate of farmed animals, who will? Animal rights activists working as individuals and within organizations are a voice for the voiceless and are determined to effect change. Activists take action by going undercover to expose what actually takes place on agri-farms, by lobbying governments to change laws overseeing the treatment of factory-farmed animals and bearing witness to the suffering of the incarcerated animals.

In sharp contrast to the American PIC system is Scandinavia's open prison system. The open prison system works to rehabilitate those imprisoned rather than gain free labour from the prisoners. In the Scandinavian open prison model, encouraged by the Nordic Model, a system which, has "... a combination of high living standards and low income disparity ..." (McWhinney 1) prisoners are equitably treated. Aleem's article, "Sweden's Remarkable Prison System Has Done What the U.S. Won't Even Consider", argues that the Scandinavian open prison system is more effective than the closed prison system, and is more human-centred than the American models:

Prisoners at open prisons stay in housing that often resembles college dorms, have access to accessories such as televisions and sound systems and are able to commute to a job and visit families while electronically monitored. Prisoners and staff eat together in the community spaces built throughout the prison. None are expected to wear uniforms ... open prison punishments can be more effective than closed prison punishments in that they don't distract the prisoner from the misdeeds that brought them there, as harsh American prisons often do ... (2)

Vegan permaculture farming, in contrast to agri-farming, is more like the Scandinavian open prison system that treats prisoners with dignity. Permaculture, explains permaculture practitioner and writer, Burnett in his book, *The Vegan Book of Permaculture*, "... stresses patterns of co-operation rather than competition in order to achieve goals that are both ecologically sound and economically viable" (xi). Vegan permaculture functions as a respectful, interconnected relationship among animals, land and people. In contrast to both traditional farming and agri-farming, vegan permaculture, says Burnett, is a practice which does not include, "... 'system components' that ...perpetuate exploitative

relationships with our non-human Earth co-citizens, such as pigs, goats and chickens, whose primary function is the production of meat, milk and eggs” (13). Burnett makes a direct link between agri-farming and the numerous fatal diseases to both humans and non-humans caused by overuse of antibiotics in the agri-farming business. Burnett writes:

Poor husbandry practices engender the mass-scale animal farming that have been linked to potentially devastating diseases of humankind such as ... E. coli, salmonella poisoning and bird flu. The indiscriminate use of antibiotics in animal feed poses yet another risk to human health. (11)

Not only can vegan permaculture be used to promote vegan ethics, it can also be used to topple outdated hierarchies. Burnett, in a blog posting about permaculture, uses the term “Liberation Permaculture” to refer to a system of working with the land, and its beings that “[s]upports the regeneration of our landbases without exploitative relationships and rejects speciesism [sic] and the domination of nonhumans” (Liberation Permaculture Weekend).

There are, indeed, alternatives to agri-farming that sustain the Earth, people and farmed beings. Similarly, holistic prison systems are working to heal people, instead of breaking already broken people and sending them back into society. Both vegan permaculture and Scandinavia’s open prison system are respectful, gentle and not profit-based. Neither of these systems is accepted as a valid option in countries that are based on capitalistic principles of fast money, and profit.

## Note

1. Speciesist or speciesism is a bias against beings that are not human, specifically slanted against animals.





## Why Must Animals be the Guinea Pigs in the Name of “Science”?

In *Animal Liberation*, Singer discusses the various ways in which animals are continuously used for human gain. Singer exposes the plight of animals and their abuse in the cigarette industry. Facts are presented that speak to speciesist practices that allow for “... tens of thousands of animals” to be forced to inhale tobacco smoke “... for months and even years ...” (88). This cruel practice is used to collect data regarding human cancer rates and smoking. Singer argues that there is no need for this inaccurate and cruel data, as “... the proof of the connection between tobacco use and lung cancer was based on data from clinical observations from human beings” (88). Singer’s argument seeks to disconnect the so-called link between science and the use of animals as experimental objects. Indeed, the Humane Society International (HSI), an American-based international animal advocacy group, denounces the use of animal testing as an unethical and cruel practice. The HSI makes a number of cogent arguments for the elimination of animal testing, some of which include:

[I]nflicting both physical pain as well as psychological distress and suffering on large numbers of sentient creatures—animal tests are time- and resource-intensive, restrictive in the number of substances that can be tested, provide little understanding of how chemicals behave in the body, and in many cases do not correctly predict real-world human reactions. Similarly, health scientists are increasingly questioning the relevance of research aimed at “modelling” human diseases in the laboratory by artificially creating symptoms in other animal species. (About Animal Testing 2)

For many decades, animals have been used in the name of science. “Science” has become an umbrella term that covers everything from car companies using live animals as crash test victims (Heneson), to drug companies testing their products meant for humans on live animals (Berthiaume; PETA; Singer). Today, many people are familiar with the fact that cosmetics and personal hygiene companies test their products on living animals. However, perhaps slightly lesser known is the fact that companies that make cleaning products, diapers, pet food and contact lenses all use animals to test the so-called efficacy of their products (Papa; Cruelty-Free Pet Food).

Another lesser-known fact is that some militaries continue to use living animals on which to test chemical weapons and as target practice in makeshift battlefields. Canada, along with five members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), still uses live animals as test subjects in military training exercises. As Berthiaume posits in his article, “Military Uses Thousands of Live Animals Every Year for Training, Testing,” the Canadian military uses a vast number of living “mice, ferrets and pigs” (1) for “... chemical-weapon antidotes and medical training” (1). These barbaric practices, say proponents, have a purpose, which is to prepare “... battlefield doctors on how to treat gunshot wounds, blast injuries and other trauma” (2).

The remaining five NATO countries that continue to use living animals in their military testing include Denmark, Norway, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States (Gala et al. 908). The remaining 23 countries that comprise the NATO-member states do not use live animal testing (What is NATO?). According to the New England Anti-Vivisection Society (NEAVS), non-human animals are used in all manner of painful and violent ways in military testing. In the following

quote, NEAVS explains the myriad ways in which animals are abused in military training settings, citing statistics from the United States Department of Defense (DoD):

Military research involves the deadliest pathogens and diseases (like Ebola, Dengue fever, and Anthrax), typically creating severe suffering and lethal results. When animals are not being subjected to chemical toxins, deadly viruses, or radiation poisoning, they are used in medical training involving gunshot wounds, tissue damage, blood loss, burns, lacerations, and other painful and physical assaults to their bodies. For example, wound lab training can entail the shooting of animals to re-create battlefield injuries, and monkeys subjected to caustic chemical agents suffer seizures, breathing difficulties, and potentially death. In 2006–2007, 24 to 32 percent of the animals used by the DoD were involved in painful experiments in which they withheld pain relief. Every year roughly 60 percent of the animals used by the DoD are involved in or exposed to painful procedures ... (Military Research 2)

Singer discusses animal torture in the United States military; a fact which was brought to the public's attention in the 1987 film, "Project X". Military experiments, Singer expounds, used monkeys to test flight simulators. The monkeys were "... subjected to radiation and to chemical airfare agents ..." (25). Singer also examines animal torture, where "[m]any of the most painful experiments are performed in the field of psychology ... during 1986 the National Institute of Mental Health funded 350 experiments on animals. The NIMH is just one source of federal funding for psychological experimentation" (42).

Of the many psychology experiments, Singer discusses, is one involving the use of shock "therapy" on Shetland ponies. The "shock therapy" experiment involving the ponies can more aptly be described as torture. The experiment was performed on ponies at the University of Kansas by a group called the Bureau of Child Research. Singer writes:

Shetland ponies were deprived of water until they were thirsty and then given a water bowl that could be electrified. Two loudspeakers were placed on either side of the ponies' heads. When noise came from the left speaker, the bowl was electrified, and the ponies received an electric shock if they were drinking. (49)

Such a cruel “experiment” is wholly unnecessary. Along with being brutal, such nazi-like experiments using animal test subjects employ technical language devoid of any emotion. As with nazi torture practices, Singer reminds us that, “[d]etachment is made easier by the use of technical jargon ...” (50). Singer refers to the sterile language used to mask the horrific practices of animal torture within behavioural psychology:

The work on “animal behavior” is always expressed in scientific, hygienic-sounding terminology, which enables the indoctrination of the normal, non-sadistic young psychology student to proceed without his anxiety being aroused ... “negative stimulus” is the term used for subjecting an animal to a stimulus which he avoids, if possible ... The cardinal sin for the experimental psychologist working in the field of “animal behavior” is anthropomorphism. Yet if he did not believe in the analogue of the human being and the lower animal even he, presumably, would find his work largely unjustified. (Singer 51)

Cartesian dualism states that since humans are capable of cogitating, they are more worthy than non-human beings. Miller and Davidson-Hunt in their essay, “Agency and Resilience: Teachings of Pikangikum First Nation Elders, Northwestern Ontario” explain how Cartesian thinking has caused a rift—one which has enabled pro-human speciesists to continue to value some human life over other forms of life:

[D]ating to pre-Aristotelian philosophy, the identification of consciousness as the cleavage between nature and culture is most often attributed to 17th century French philosopher, René Descartes (1596–1650). The Cartesian “mind-body problem” posits that while the material (body) is subject to the laws of physics, mind (consciousness) largely exists independently from the physical world ... Through this framing, humans alone are capable of perceiving time, acting with self-interest against future conditions, and communicating complex concepts through symbolic means ... (1)

Using “hygienic-sounding terminology” (Singer 51), namely, language that is void of emotion, relegates those who are used as experimental fodder in the name of science as a number and not as a being. This attitude demonstrates that Cartesian and nazi ethics are still

valued. Szybel's, essay, "Can the Treatment of Animals be Compared to the Holocaust?" explains the ways in which those who torture animals maintain a nazi-like distance from the beings they are harming. Szybel explains that "... the practice of not identifying by name the millions of animals used in experimental research every year" (103) is a key element in maintaining a scientific hold on the subjects. Instead of names "... numbers are displayed on tags around the neck, or are tattooed onto the skin ... Without names, they become faceless, lose their identity. It's extreme exploitation, the same as in the labs of Nazi Germany ..." (103).

In contrast to the Cartesian belief that animals are not capable of having emotion or cogitating, Miller and Davidson-Hunt sought to counter this divisive belief system by interviewing elders from the Pikangikum First Nation in North-western Ontario. In the ensuing quote, Ojibwa elder, Oliver Hill, encapsulates the belief system shared by many communities of First Nations who live traditional lives, close to the Earth, "[e]verything on the land, plants and animals has a mind. Maybe you call it instinct. Fish have that too. Many times we think that animals are just animals. That's not true. They know where to find things to eat. They think" (6).

Non-Cartesian, holistic thinking, as perceived by indigenous people who maintain traditional values, appreciates and respects animals' ways of knowing—something which more humans, of all cultures, need to learn. People who embrace vegan ethics understand the worldview that expresses this inherent interconnection of all beings.



## It's Official—Animals Are Sentient!

Only recently have laws been created, worldwide, to recognize that animals can think and feel, echoing what many indigenous belief systems already understand. Proctor defines animal sentience as "... the ability of animals to experience pleasurable states such as joy, and aversive states such as pain and fear ..." (628). According to the European Union Lisbon Treaty of 2007, animals have been legally recognized as having sentience. The treaty states that "... the Union and the Member States shall, since animals are sentient beings, pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals ..." (Marabelli 6).

Following the European Union's momentous decision was India's 2013 decision to recognize dolphins as sentient, thereby granting dolphins the status of "non-human personhood" (M. Adams 2). Adams' article, "Dolphins Granted Personhood by Government of India", contends that the Indian government's decision to recognize dolphins as thinking, feeling beings is an important precedent "... making India the first nation in the world to recognize the unique intelligence and self-awareness of the cetacean order (a class of aquatic mammals) ..." (M. Adams 1). Along with the decision to recognize dolphins as



non-human persons, India has also banned “captive dolphin shows” (M. Adams 1). Dolphins, like other beings, have a “self awareness” (M. Adams 1), and researchers have observed that they have a highly complex language with which they communicate. Adams explains:

[D]olphins have their own complete language, much like humans ... the main difference between dolphin language and human language is that dolphins aren't vaccinated as young children and injected with brain-damaging mercury. Therefore, dolphins grow up able to speak in fully coherent sentences while many humans now are cognitively deficient and unable to compose meaningful sentences. (They are literally brain damaged by vaccines, mercury fillings and toxic chemicals in foods, medicines and personal care products ... (M. Adams 1)

The year 2015 marked a number of major worldwide victories in the area of animal rights. In the United States, two chimpanzees, Leo and Hercules, who had been living in the Long Island University laboratories, and were the “property” of that university, were granted legal “personhood”. The chimpanzees were being used for “biomedical experimentation” (NhRP 1). Leo and Hercules were represented by the Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP), an American organization devoted to protecting and securing the rights of non-human beings. The judge in the case set a major precedent by choosing to recognize the chimpanzees as beings, or “legal persons” (NhRP 1).

Argentina also set a legal precedent regarding animal rights when it recognized Sandra, an old chimpanzee, who had been incarcerated in a zoo for 20 years, as having sentience. Hays', article, “Ape in Argentina Granted Human Rights” contextualizes why such a ruling is so important:

It's the first time an animal has been granted expansive basic rights on par with a human. The decision was handed down by a high-level criminal appeals court in Buenos Aires last month; it's expected to spur action on some 17 similar cases, filed by animal rights activists on behalf of some 17 chimpanzees in zoos throughout Argentina. (1)

In France, dogs were recognized as having sentience, overturning a 1804 law that saw pets as “movable goods” (Froelich 1). Similar

to both the EU's decision to recognize animals as having feelings and thoughts, and India's decision to grant dolphins, the status of "non-human person" is New Zealand's decision to legally recognize animals as having sentience (Buchanan). Buchanan discusses the momentous decision in the article, "New Zealand: Animal Welfare Legislation Recognizes Animals as Sentient, Bans Cosmetic Testing". That New Zealand, like the EU, has chosen to legally recognize that all animals have feelings, thoughts and the ability to feel pain (among other physical and tactile sensations) is a crucial step forward in the evolving paradigm. The bill titled, The Animal Welfare Amendment Act (Buchanan), does not only recognize that animals can think and feel, but bans "... the use of animals to test finished cosmetic products or ingredients that are intended for use exclusively in cosmetics ..." (1).

Like New Zealand, as of 2004, the EU banned the use of all cosmetic testing on animals, rather than just on the finished product (Ban on Animal Testing). Laws pertaining to animal welfare, in most countries, still choose to regard non-human beings as property. Yet, while the world is still cottoning on to the necessity of a vegan-based ethics, animal welfare and its extension, veganism, is having a positive impact on the world. In Canada, veganism and vegetarianism are on the rise. In the United States, it has been reported, that as of 2015 "... 5% of the United States population is vegetarian and half of those people are vegan" (Watters 1).



## The Nazis' Human Holocaust and the Extreme Extermination of Animal Beings at the Hands of "Science"

If companies that choose to view animals only as disposable test subjects were to recognize that animal beings have sentience, using animals on which to experiment would no longer be acceptable. Sadly, animals such as monkeys, cats, dogs, mice, rats and rabbits are still routinely used as test subjects by companies in many countries which have not yet recognized their sentience. The ways in which animals are hurt and abused for human gain can be likened to the ways in which the nazis used both human and animal victims in their "science experiments" (Cohen; Szybel; Wells).

Cohen's, "Nazi Medical Experimentation: The Ethics of Using Medical Data from Nazi Experiments" provides lucid examples of how the system of nazi domination justified the use of torture on othered people under the guise of "science experiments". Indeed, Cohen's work draws salient parallels between factory farming and concentration camps:

The Nazi physicians performed brutal medical experiments upon helpless concentration camp inmates. These acts of torture were characterized by several shocking features: (1) persons were forced to become subjects in very

dangerous studies against their will; (2) nearly all subjects endured incredible suffering, mutilation, and indescribable pain; and (3) the experiments often were deliberately designed to terminate in a fatal outcome for their victims. (2)

Much in the same way the inmates of the nazi death camps were dehumanized, animals are routinely used, wholly against their will, by the Ego-based scientific community to find solutions to human health problems. While many people still adhere to the false belief that using animals on which to perform painful, cruel tests will be beneficial and productive to humans, not everyone wishes to remain in the dark about this vile practice.

In 2012, the Lush Prize was founded in England. The Lush Prize rewards scientists who choose to eschew the old, Ego-based paradigm that supports using non-human animals as test subjects, and recognizes those who seek alternative ways of conducting research:

The Lush Prize is a major initiative aiming to bring forward the day when safety testing takes place without the use of animals. It focuses pressure on toxicity testing for consumer products and ingredients, in a way which complements the many projects already addressing the use of animals in medical testing. (About the Lush Prize)

While the Lush Prize has only been in existence for a few years, it represents an important need in society, and a significant step forward in the animal rights movement. Animals never have a choice as to whether they want to become a test subject, and sometimes, as happened in the nazi era, neither do people. Szybel puts forth the argument that the ways in which the inmates in the nazi camps, specifically Jewish people, were treated, can be likened to the myriad, disturbing ways in which animals are also treated for scientific ends:

[B]oth broad and detailed comparisons can be made between the Holocaust and what I refer to as the oppression of animals. The real issue is not whether the comparison can be made ... because I ... prove that it can be made: the real question is whether we should dare to make the comparison, or to voice our opinions that there are chilling similarities between how Jews were treated in the Holocaust and how animals are treated in the present day. This is perhaps equally a matter of ethics pertaining to humans as it is of ethics pertaining to

animals, since the comparison involves treating Holocaust victims in a certain way, that is, as comparable to nonhuman animals. (98)

Comparing humans to animals may seem insulting to some because we have been taught, by and large, to deem animals as expendable and see them as having less worth than some humans. Moreover, that some people feel offended when a comparison is drawn between humans and animals exemplifies the fact that speciesist values are deeply embedded in the normative human psyche. In the following quote, disability and animal activist, vegan and artist, Sunaura Taylor, who herself is disabled, analyses the speciesist slant that is prevalent to most people who are differently abled. For many who have physical disabilities, being compared to an animal is the norm. While the intention is to hurt, Taylor questions this aim:

In my life I have been compared to many animals. I have been told I walk like a monkey, eat like a dog, have hands like a lobster, and generally resemble a chicken or penguin. These comparisons have been said out of both mean-spiritedness and a spirit of playfulness. As a child I remember knowing that when my fellow kindergarten classmates told me I walked like a monkey, that they meant it to hurt my feelings, which of course it did. However, I wasn't exactly sure why it should hurt my feelings—after all, monkeys were my favorite animal. I had dozens of monkey toys. (2)

The primary aim of comparing someone to a monkey, dog or other non-human being is to cause hurt and shame. It is easy to discount othered people, because, like animals, they are not seen as having agency. In this vein, the work of Wells along with that of Cohen, Szybel and Krans looks at what happens when othered people are robbed of their agency. Wells', "Modern-Day Vaccines Have Their Roots in Nazi Medical Experiments", examines the ways nazis regularly tested trial drugs on imprisoned people in the death camps:

Auschwitz, the largest German concentration camp of WWII, was the ideal "guinea pig" testing arena for dangerous pharmaceutical drugs and vaccines created by IG Farben (a very powerful cartel that consisted of German chemical and pharmaceutical companies such as BASF, Bayer, and Hoechst). Jewish prisoners of war would not be able to "sue" the government, so inhumane

testing ensued. By vaccinating Jews, homosexuals, and anyone who denied the political views of the Nazis (including children), Hitler was isolating his “master race” by sickening, weakening, or killing (the?) opposition, with a passive and silent terror campaign through vaccinations and nerve gas. (1)

Sztybel connects the treatment that Jewish people endured at the hands of the nazis to the ways animals are subjected to torture, “... the rationale for using animals in laboratories is comparable to that which was used for subjecting Jews and others to “scientific” experimentation” (103). Undoubtedly, the thought of being forced into being vaccinated seems very draconian. Forced vaccination was still a reality in the United States until the 1970s. Krans’ essay, “Pain, Suffering, and the History of Human Experimentation” makes a further link between modern-day prisoners and nazi death camps. The essay examines the treatment of American prisoners who were also forced to get vaccinations, and endure experimental surgery:

From 1918 to 1922, inmates at California’s San Quentin State Prison were subjected to numerous medical procedures, including receiving transplanted testicles from recently executed prisoners ... Up until the 1960’s [sic], about 90 percent of pharmaceutical research was done on prison inmates, as drug companies needed large pools of test subjects. Prison inmate testing ended in the 1970s. (1)

While forced tests and vaccinations of prison inmates in the United States has ended, Wells explains that as recently as 2006, under President George W. Bush, an Act was created that gave the government the right to force all its citizens to get vaccinated. The aim of the law, called, the “Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PREP)” (Wells 1) was “... to declare a ‘national emergency’ for any infectious disease” (1) deemed to be dangerous to the public. This event would lead to “... mandatory vaccinations for the entire population of the United States” (Wells 1). In other words, the creation of such a law would give the United States government total control over people’s lives and health. Sztybel points out that the prolific, Nobel Prize-winning, Yiddish language writer, Isaac Bashevis Singer called “... both Nazis and animal experimenters “victims of conditioned ethical blindness...” (105).

Bashevis Singer was a vegetarian and is noted to have said, "My vegetarianism is my religion" (Animal Rights 2). After winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1978, Bashevis Singer discussed his reasons for becoming vegetarian:

The same questions are bothering me today as they did fifty years ago. Why is one born? Why does one suffer? In my case, the suffering of animals also makes me very sad. I'm a vegetarian ... When I see how little attention people pay to animals, and how easily they make peace with man being allowed to do with animals whatever he wants because he keeps a knife or a gun, it gives me a feeling of misery and sometimes anger with the Almighty ... I feel that animals are as bewildered as we are except that they have no words for it. I would say that all life is asking: "What am I doing here?" (Animal Rights 3)

Indeed, what are animals doing in laboratories, or, for that matter on factory farms? More pointedly, why do people continue this deplorable treatment? The Lush Prize is one such way to reward people who chose to eschew the nefarious practice of animal testing. Rewarding scientists, who do not elect to obtain test results through torturous means, help to shift the paradigm and cultivate an ethic of love, respect and hope.





## Animal Entertainment—Fun or Torture?

Non-human animals are routinely used in all ways for human benefit. Animals are used in “entertainment”, such as in circuses and zoos. Entertainment is the most public form of animal abuse, and therefore, people are more able to bear witness to the physical suffering animals must endure to satisfy people. However, while many people bear witness and act to affect change in these areas, there are countless others who see nothing wrong with being entertained by the pain of others. Visiting aquariums, like SeaWorld and MarineLand, and going to circuses fuel the horror stories that describe the suffering of incarcerated animals. What humans consider entertaining is hell for the animals who are forced to act or perform for the amusement of humans or to be on perpetual display as in zoos.

In the report, “Killer Controversy Why Orcas Should no Longer be Kept in Captivity” written by senior scientist for the Humane Society International and the Humane Society of the United States, Rose exposes the abuses that captive orcas face at the tourist attraction, SeaWorld. It is a place where sea animals such as orcas, seals and dolphins, living in squalid captivity, are forced to perform. Rose explains that many orcas

die in the captive environment in which they are forced to live, and the overwhelming cause of death is one borne out of anxiety, which leads to infections:

The most common causes of death in captive orcas, wild-caught or captive-born, are pneumonia, septicemia, and other types of infection. That many infections turn lethal in captive orcas highlights the fact that wildlife often does not manifest clinical signs of illness until it is too late for treatment. Pathogens or injuries that the immune systems of wild orcas would successfully combat or manage may be fatal to captive orcas, due to chronic stress, psychological depression, and even boredom. All of these can cause immune system dysfunction or other health problems in many species ... (5)

Whales, belugas, and other beings that have been stolen from the sea have no legal protection from mistreatment. Diebel reports that in Canada, “[T]here are no government regulations for sea mammal captivity ... The Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums, a self-regulating industry association, first licensed the aquatic park known as MarineLand in 2007 ...” (1). Since governments refuse to be the voice for animals in marine parks, individuals and animal rights organizations have stepped up. The 2013 documentary, *Blackfish* depicts the mistreatment of orcas in captivity. Portraying the cycle of being caught in the sea, to living out their lives in squalid captivity, *Blackfish* has given a voice to the captive, silent giants of the sea.

## Pullman Porters

Consider the Pullman porters, who, like othered human beings, were put in the role of the *show pony* and forced to perform for another's amusement. The Pullman porters can be likened to animals who are forced to be on parade/display and perform. Pullman porters were African-American men who were hired to work on George Pullman's luxury sleeping car trains travelling across America.

George Pullman, a white American, created his luxury trains in the late 19th century (McWatt). Two years before the creation of the Pullman Palace Car Company, enslaved African Americans had been freed under the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. This law left many enslaved people at a loss for income. The Pullman company offered "... one of the first, relatively well-paying jobs for former slaves after the Civil War ..." (Bruinius 2). George Pullman hired newly freed men to work as porters chiefly because he knew they would be experts at servility. As Weber explains in his article, "He Hired Formerly Enslaved Black Men Because They Knew How to Be 'Servile.' so They Formed A Union", servility ensured compliance so that the (white) passengers were kept happy:

One of the key features of Pullman trains was the service. Pullman hired thousands of former slaves who had the experience of “serving” masters and their families, which translated to the clientele. But there was a strict divide among the labor: White conductors collected tickets and sold upgrades along the routes, while African-American porters carried luggage, cleaned the cars, shined shoes, cooked and served meals, and made travelers feel pampered. In addition to this divide was one of wages—white workers received on average six times as much as the porters, which meant the porters relied heavily on tips. (5)

Owing to the servility of Black,<sup>1</sup> male porters, the wealthy white passengers did not perceive the porters as a threat. Asukile’s article, “Joel Augustus Rogers’ Race Vindication: A Chicago Pullman Porter & the Making of the From Superman to Man (1917)”, contends that the enforced servility created a sense of “safety” for the racist, white passengers:

African American porters were considered non threatening to white passengers, who never acknowledged them until they needed to be served. Essentially, African American porters were considered invisible, expected to be submissive, and for many white passengers smiling black faces embodied the highest level of servility ... (283)

Obsequiousness and servility were demanded of all porters, and even more so among those with dark skin. The racism of the day lent itself to the idea that men with more melanin could more readily blend into the background, and not be visible save for their white teeth and ever-present smiles. Not only were the porters mistreated and ranked on the hue of their complexions, but they also had to contend with acts of humiliation as requested by the passengers. Often the porters were placed in very difficult positions, forced to choose between their livelihoods and performing for passengers. Choosing not to kowtow they faced job loss, or even death.

Arndt’s essay, “The Pullman Porter, On and off the Rails” elucidates how the porters were made to perform at the behest of the passengers. The following excerpt highlights the connection between the treatment of porters as othered people, and animals forced into lives of perpetual servility for human consumption:

At least one porter recalled being made to bark like a dog for his passengers' amusement. Others were asked to sing, dance and allow children to ride their backs ... porters were required to be obliging and docile, or they risked losing their jobs—or worse. (Arndt 3)

Pullman porters were made to act like scared children and referred to as either “Boy”—to indicate a hierarchy of inferiority, or as “George”, as a way to reinforce a master-slave relationship between the porters and the owner of the company, George Pullman. Asukile asserts that in calling porters, George, a master-slave hierarchy was drugged back up; “[w]hite passengers calling African American porters, “George” was consciously and unconsciously related to the practice of former enslaved Africans being identified with the surname of their slave-masters” (283).

Othered people exist within the framework of the patriarchal Ego Model, and, like animals, have fewer rights and worth. The treatment of othered people in post-colonial societies and in capitalist enterprises is no different than the contemptible ways the Ego system continues to treat animals on factory farms, zoos and circuses.

## Note

1. I have chosen to capitalize the word “Black” to invert the pyramid; one, which always has seen melanated people as having less to no worth. I am, therefore, choosing to keep the word “white” in lower case, to change the balance of power.



## Circuses and Marine Parks

The modern circus has been evolving into a progressive form of entertainment from its origins. When one thinks of a circus, images are conjured up of wild animals: bears, lions, tigers and elephants being made to perform for human entertainment. The modern circus has its roots in the Roman Circus Maximus which included animals and enslaved people entertaining the fickle public. Murray's essay, "Circuses Are No Fun for Animals", describes the different types of entertainment prevalent in Roman circuses including "... equestrian events, and, later, wild-animal displays ... Little attention was paid to those injured or killed during these events—slaves and animals—because they were "nonpersons" according to Roman law" (2).

The Romans were very war-minded people who placed great emphasis on maintaining hierarchies of separation and power over enslaved people. It is little wonder, then, that the same system of domination over human and non-human others existed and continues to have a place in the kind of circus that enslaves animals.

It is important to note that while the job of a Pullman porter no longer exists, systemic racism still does; as do colonial attitudes which



perpetuate the enslavement of othered beings for entertainment such as in marine parks and circuses. Public entertainment ventures such as SeaWorld, MarineLand and Ringling Bros Circus use force and the confinement of animals to reap profits. In the past few years, with activists exposing these vile practices, many of these enterprises have seen huge profit losses. Rhodan's article, "Seaworld's Profits Drop 84% After 'Blackfish' Documentary" explains that SeaWorld's profits have dropped significantly "... from \$37.4 million in 2014 to \$5.8 million in 2015" (1). The major revenue loss for the park, says Rhodan, is owed, in large part, to the documentary *Blackfish*. The documentary depicts a "... grim look at life in captivity for Orca whales, and has launched a series of campaigns [sic] discounts to keep visitors interested" (1).

Activists and animal rights organizations are refusing to participate in the suffering of others as they take to task such enterprises as MarineLand. On November 10, 2016, the OSPCA (Ontario Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals) visited MarineLand and formally charged the park with five counts of animal cruelty. Interestingly, not one of the charges pertained to sea animals, nor were any of the animals removed (Marineland: In Depth). Among the acts of cruelty, according to the OSPCA, were the ways in which some birds and the 35 bears were kept without "... adequate and appropriate food and water ..." (Marineland: In Depth).

More recently, an American animal advocacy group, Last Chance for Animals, along with a former MarineLand employee, visited the park and took disturbing photos including images of piles of dead deer. They also made a horrifically, heart-breaking video documenting the deplorable conditions in which the animals are forced to live. The film shows the cramped conditions of guinea hens living in a small enclosure and exposes the sad state of the housing conditions of various birds: "Marineland [sic] keeps birds so densely confined they peck each other's feathers out" (Marineland: In Depth). There are horrendous images of mouldy food and fly-covered fish fed to the bears, many of whom are shown to be extremely thin and suffer from diarrhea. These emaciated creatures pick through trash "... that litters their enclosure" in order to try and find more nourishment (Marineland: In Depth).

This kind of bad press has contributed to marine parks losing sales and being exposed for the torture camps they truly are. The same is true for “big top circuses”. It has been reported that the public has been losing interest in the infamous Ringling Bros. Circus owing to the courageous work of animal rights advocates. Social pressure from animal rights campaigners has meant that the hidden cruelty is being exposed. As the truth emerges, new laws banning animal abuses in the so-called animal entertainment sector are being enacted. Gubbins’ article, “Ringling Bros. Popularity Plummet Amid Growing Protests Over Animal Cruelty” examines the shift in paradigm, which documents the continued profit loss in those enterprises that still hurt animals. In response to continued public exposure promoted by activists, essential legal changes are being made despite the recalcitrant position of some companies who have taken legal measures, “companies that profit from the use or sale of animals have hastened to enact legislation protecting them from scrutiny. Some states now make it illegal to photograph or videotape at a factory that processes animals for food ...” (Gubbins 2).

However, activists continue to expose these abusers:

In April, Los Angeles banned the use of bullhooks, the sharp-edged tool used by Ringling trainers; in June, Mexico banned the use of animals entirely. A year-long investigation by Mother Jones found that Ringling elephants lead miserable lives, are afflicted by illnesses that the circus ignores, and that a number of elephants have died “under disturbing circumstances.” (Gubbins 2)

That social pressure is helping to expose and bring changes to the scope of the violence perpetrated against animals in circuses and marine parks speaks directly to the fact that the veganistic shift is taking root. What’s more, circuses that do not use any animals such as Cirque du Soleil—a circus that only utilizes human acrobats as entertainment—continue to thrive. Indeed, Mauborgne attests that “[i]n less than twenty years since its creation, Cirque du Soleil has achieved a level of revenues that took Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey—the once global champions of the circus industry—more than one hundred years to attain” (Mauborgne). Inherent in these changes is the evidence that not only is veganism, as a diet and a world view, becoming

increasingly appealing to larger numbers of people, but so too are its philosophical cousins—non-violence and respect for all.

## Final Thoughts

Veganism and vegan-based ethics are working to dismantle the Ego-based structures that seek to maintain the traditional balance of power. To this end, the hierarchical pyramid, which favours heterosexual men—who are, often, Christian and white—at the top, is no longer acceptable, nor does it speak on behalf of the growing vegan movement. The Eco Model, which seeks to replace the pyramidal power structure, perceives a circle of relationships in which no species is placed above anyone or anything else. In this *heterarchy*, a term first introduced by Warren S. McCulloch, a cybernetician and physician, to mean a network within a system (Von Goldhammer, et al. 1, 3) ranking, as a way to measure success, is no longer valid. The tenets of the Eco Model are co-operation, communication and empathy. A heterarchical system or an ontarchy, in contrast to the traditional pyramidal structure of a hierarchy, views systems as sharing power. As Schumacher explains:

[T]here was a time and a place for the traditional machine-like hierarchy, organizations of various types are gradually moving away from that model ... As organizations change, leadership will also change. A key characteristic of

new modes of leadership include sharing power within organizations rather than retaining it at the top ... (41)

An ontarchy proposes a more organic world view, and veganism is an important pillar of its structure. Veganistic practices, using a heterarchical, Eco Model, encourage Lovingkindness, mindfulness and respect towards all beings, including the whole Earth. Enlightened initiatives such as The Lush Prize, Cirque du Soleil, vegan permaculture, plant-based (protein) alternatives, and the Scandinavian open prison system all speak to a growing consciousness, one which endeavours to create positive change beneficial for all beings.

When the bridge of consciousness begins to fully extend to include all beings, then the Ego Model—a model built on divisiveness, will no longer be used to bolster arguments as to why animals should be abused. Why should animals be used in place of willing humans to do testing of any kind?

Language and thinking go hand in hand. The words one uses are based on how one thinks about something. For some, using the term “pet owner” is the norm. For those who have put thought into the words they use, the term “pet owner” implies that the animal is nothing more than an object, a commodity—someone/or, more aptly, something to be bought, and used by the owners. “Pet owner”, like “livestock”, indicates that the non-human animal occupies a position of little importance save for being someone’s “pet” or “stock”. The term, “owner” is used in the same way that enslaved, Black people were regarded as the property of their white masters, or the way in which women were viewed as chattel before suffrage exposed this master–slave relationship. As Singer deftly asserts, “[w]e commonly use the word “animal” to mean “animals other than human beings”. This usage sets humans apart from other animals, implying that we are not ourselves animals ... Animal Liberation is Human Liberation too” (vi-vii).

Veganism is a social justice movement emerging alongside the emancipation of enslaved people, the American Civil Rights movement, the Women’s Liberation movement, the LGBTQ Rights movement and

Deep Ecology. These movements have one tenet in common; they are connected to the emerging consciousness that perceives a new social order best found in the ontarchy of the Eco Model, where relationships are predicated on valuing all beings and working for their rights and freedoms.



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The book draws links between colonial and neo-colonial power structures which have sought to maintain hierarchies of dominance, resulting in cruel practices towards people at the bottom of the hierarchy and animals, who, in a colonial mindset, only exist for human gain. To counter these harm-based ideologies and practices, veganism, as an ethical movement, is seeking to give voice to all those who support animals, and the rights of animals, while also seeking to give a voice to animals themselves. Additionally, veganism seeks to challenge the old-guard power structures and cruel practices perpetuated by colonial and neo-colonial systems associated with the dominant Ego power structure. Vegan ethics represent a shift from the dominant Ego model of human relations represented by a pyramid of power towards an Eco model of human relationships in which all Beings have equal worth and agency.



**Micol Kates** received an MA in interdisciplinary studies in 2017 with a focus on veganism and ethnobotany. She is a teacher and tutor in post-secondary institutions. Kates is interested in pursuing work in animal rights and created an online petition asking the Canadian government to create an amendment to the Canadian Charter of Rights to give animals rights. The petition received more than 5,000 signatures. Kates is also a visual artist and landscape photographer. See her website at [www.micol-kates.wix.com/landscape-photography](http://www.micol-kates.wix.com/landscape-photography).