HUMANE DISPOSABILITY

HUMANE DISPOSABILITY: RETHINKING "FOOD ANIMALS," ANIMAL WELFARE, AND VEGETARIANISM IN RESPONSE TO THE FACTORY FARM

By JESSICA L.W. CAREY, B.A., M.A.

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AUTHOR: Jessica L.W. Carey, B.A. (Simon Fraser University), M.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor David L. Clark

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ABSTRACT

Intensively industrialized animal agriculture, or factory farming, poses many challenges for our notions of "life" and how it should be treated. Factory farming's mass instrumentalization and exploitation of animals potentially unsettles both our most basic notions regarding the justice of sacrificing certain lives in order to improve other lives, and our decisions about which lives belong to each category. This thesis examines the factory farm as a site that relies upon and produces particular lessons about life. The first chapter explores factory farming's insistence that economically useful features of animals can be endlessly manipulated and optimized, summarily rendering disposable all other aspects of their lives. Recent work on "neoliberal" economic ideology identifies the emergence of similar conclusions about *human* life under neoliberalism, yet animal life remains largely un-theorized in this context. Meanwhile, the field of critical animal studies is generating a rich body of work theorizing our exclusion of animals from full ethical and political consideration, but has yet to grapple with how the factory farm brings to bear its own economizing logic that intensifies the "othering" of animal life. The resulting pedagogy of life reverberates throughout the range of cultural responses to factory farming. Chapter Two discusses factory farm designer Temple Grandin's work in order to illustrate how attempts to situate the site within ostensibly non-economic narratives of life such as ecology, comparative epistemology, and spirituality reveal ways that those narratives can become complicit with the factory farm's neoliberal pedagogy. Chapter Three examines current representations of vegetarian identity, demonstrating that even resistant responses can reinscribe the factory farm's sacrificial economy. The thesis concludes that alternative futures for critical resistance to the factory farm depend upon a more thorough apprehension of its conceptual reach, and concerted pedagogical and ethical work through and beyond its framing of both human and animal life.

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Introduction

> However one interprets it, whatever practical, technical, scientific, juridical, ethical, or political consequence one draws from it, no one can today deny this event—that is, the *unprecedented* proportions of this subjection of the animal…Neither can one seriously deny the disavowal that this involves. No one can deny seriously any more, or for very long, that men do all they can in order to dissimulate this cruelty from themselves; in order to organize on a global scale the forgetting or misunderstanding of this violence, which some would compare to the worst cases of genocide…Everybody knows what the production, breeding, transport, and slaughter of these animals has become. (Derrida, *Animal* 25-26)

No one can deny, everybody knows: the sweeping inclusivity of Jacques Derrida's indictment of both our knowledge about what we do to animals and our effort to "misunderstand" this violence is especially significant given the consistently rigorous critical attention Derrida has paid, throughout his oeuvre, to the stakes and consequences of making totalized, axiomatic, or categorical generalizations. Rhetorically elegant though it may be, then, Derrida's repeated invocation of universality throughout this short section of *The Animal That Therefore I Am* outlining his first hypothesis on "the animal" carries an uncanny force that we should read as being anything but offhand. Instead, I argue that Derrida's insistence upon the undeniability and indubitability of our collective awareness and effacement of violence against animals hearkens to a central premise of his later work on animals, work that has become pivotal in the burgeoning field of critical animal studies. Namely, Derrida calls us to apprehend the profound extent to which disavowed violence against animals operates structurally, at the heart of our concepts of human subjectivity and culture.

In this thesis I take up Derrida's call to investigate the structural force, origins, and implications of our "noncriminal putting to death" (Derrida and Nancy 278) of animals, by exploring the pedagogical dimensions of what I argue is the most concentrated locus of our effort to "organize on a global scale the forgetting or misunderstanding of this violence": the North American factory farm. A popular notion concerning the factory farm is that our culture responds to its violence in the mode of a "non-response": that our usual reaction to the site is to turn away entirely, cleanly refusing to engage the site at all. In this reading, popularized by celebrity musician Paul McCartney's oft-cited claim that "[i]f slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be vegetarian" ("Glass Walls"), the presumption is that any lack of critical engagement with the factory farm is attributable to a mere absence of thought—that if not directly confronted with the stimuli of the factory farm, we merely cease to think about it. In other words, we *simply* forget the farm, on an individual, psychological basis, and in a way that perhaps renders us akin to the "animals" that are capable only of reacting, not responding, to stimuli—animals that as Derrida argues, can really only rigorously exist in our (and Lacan's) imaginations.[1] Indeed, is such "simple" forgetting even possible? Does not the fervent manner in which we seem to forget or efface the factory farm suggest that the kind of forgetting at work here is less the sign of a mere negative lack of attention, than of a concerted, positive effort—one that

[1] See Derrida's reading in the "And Say the Animal Responded?" chapter of the *Animal That Therefore I Am*, of Lacan's untenable distinction between humans and nonhuman animals based on an ostensibly human-only ability to respond to the other, as opposed to the animal's mere capacity to "react" to the other—a distinction Lacan premises upon the difference between the capacity to perform a pretense and the capacity to perform a pretense of pretense.

Freud, for instance, called "repression"? Along such lines, Slavoj Žižek remarks that we reply to the factory farm with "a violent exclusionary gesture of refusing to see" (52), since "[w]ho among us would be able to continue eating pork chops after visiting a factory farm in which pigs are half-blind and cannot even properly walk, but are just fattened to be killed?" (53). Certainly, Žižek's positing of violence in the very act of *refusing* to see violence against the other falls in line with much contemporary ethics-related thought, especially among "Continental" philosophers; Zygmunt Bauman, for instance, cites as a central problem for ethics the fact that "[w]e dispose of leftovers in the most radical and effective way: we make them invisible by not looking and unthinkable by not thinking" (*Wasted* 27). Along with these thinkers, I insist upon the continued need to identify and investigate the ways that "refusing to see" remains an obstacle for justice. However, in order to differentiate my analysis from the hegemonic model of seeing/not seeing that seems to attend much cultural discourse on factory farming—that we each personally choose either to acknowledge or ignore factory farm violence as such—in this thesis I approach the factory farm and our responses to it in the positive register of exploring the narratives, economies, and power relations that they *do* articulate through human-animal violence. In other words, the factory farm gives us more than the plain imperative not to look; it also performatively justifies itself, articulates a particular logic of lives and power, and relies on us to supplement and reinscribe those narratives in the broader field of culture. Beyond any constitutively illusory notion of "mere" forgetting, these

pedagogical iterations model particular ways, reasons, and means for what Derrida calls the organized, shared "forgetting or misunderstanding of this violence."

Consequently, a central premise of this dissertation is that the "noncriminal putting to death" of animals depends upon a pedagogical milieu that is far more complex than any collective agreement to look away, either literally—though we do often refuse to literally look through the windowless walls of the factory farm; or figuratively—though undoubtedly we encourage each other simply not to think about it in myriad ways. Instead, I argue that the factory farm is the site of an intense education in *how* to look: how to define and frame both animal and human life. Moreover, this education reverberates far beyond the site of the factory farm, throughout the contemporary cultural discourses that concern the farming and eating of animals.

The primary theoretical context for my investigation is the emerging multidisciplinary field of animal studies, specifically what is often called the "posthumanist" thread of critical animal studies, whose thinkers are concerned with articulating a revitalized ethical mode of being-with other animals in the wake of our collective critique of the humanist structure of subjectivity and its violently exclusionary potential.[2] Derrida's later work on animals is a touchstone

[2] The human subject to which I refer in this thesis draws heavily upon the insights of deconstructive thought: I am speaking of a subject that irrevocably exists in being-with-others; that does not precede the relationships, living and nonliving, that pre-exist and follow its being in the world; that manifests a "singularity that dislocates or divides itself in gathering itself together to answer to the other" (Derrida and Nancy 261); and that despite these constitutive conditions has

for such work, as is the work of Cary Wolfe, who continues to identify the distinctively posthumanist elements of this facet of animal studies, in books like *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* and *What is Posthumanism?* To be clear, the kind of "posthumanism" Wolfe discerns in animal studies does not aim at achieving a post-human, but rather a post-humanism: in its commitment to undermining the aspects of humanism that have sought to violently exclude those others deemed less than human (including, to be sure, vast numbers of human beings), posthumanism requires us, according to Wolfe, "to attend to that thing called 'the human' with *greater* specificity, *greater* attention to its embodiment, embeddedness, and materiality, and how these in turn shape and are shaped by consciousness, mind, and so on" (*What* 120). In this light, a key premise of this thesis is that the factory farm is perhaps one of the most deeply humanist sites in existence: there, the "human" and its exclusive position vis-à-vis other life is structurally inscribed and presumed, and definitively—certainly, too, a little bit anxiously—*not* up for interrogation.

In other words, posthumanist animal studies doubly "comes after" the factory farm. Through its interrogative approach to humanism, we can pursue the presumptive, humanist terms of the factory farm; at the same time, the productive un-working of the assumptions of humanism that unfolds in posthumanist animal theorizing does not yet describe the world we live in, and thus seems to hail from

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pervasively articulated itself in terms of its assumed ability to violently and allergically immunize itself against the other.

the future. Along these lines, I want to point here to three key gambits of posthumanist animal studies with which this thesis is in continual conversation—trajectories that this thesis is informed by and, in turn, that this thesis helps to complicate and articulate with more specificity.

The first two manoeuvres consist in a double movement that is common to posthumanist interrogations of the human-animal relationship. On one hand of this double movement, there is a theoretical effort to interrogate claims that the human species is exceptional or superior, and thus that it may be set apart from other lives based upon exclusive criteria that inevitably justify humanity's dominance over others. Against the supposed mastery of self and others achieved by the ostensibly autonomous and self-contained humanist subject, Derrida argues that we can no longer ignore our own vulnerability, our own "nonpower at the heart of power" (*Animal* 28) that subjects us not only to the same inescapable suffering experienced by animals,[3] but also to all the signifying systems that precede and exceed us.[4] Interrogating the supposedly single line between humans and other animals, Derrida suggests, "means asking whether what calls itself human has the right rigorously to attribute to man, which means therefore to attribute to himself, what he refuses the animal" (*Animal* 135). This kind of gesture, recently named by Anat Pick as "one of *contraction*: making ourselves

[3] On this score, Derrida argues: "Being able to suffer is no longer a power; it is a possibility without power, a possibility of the impossible. Mortality resides there, as the most radical means of thinking the finitude that we share with animals" (*Animal* 28).
[4] See, for example, Derrida's assertion that "[t]races erase (themselves), like everything else, but the structure of the trace is such that it cannot be in anyone's *power* to erase *it* and especially not to 'judge' its erasure…" (*Animal* 136).

'less human,' as it were" (*Creaturely* 6), is articulated in various ways throughout animal studies. To cite just a few examples, Nicole Shukin traces the historical contingency of animal signs in *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times*; Donna Haraway develops an account of human evolution that reveals an inexorable dependence upon the emergence of other species in *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*; and Matthew Calarco convincingly deconstructs the claims of human exception made by key humanist philosophers in *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*. Yet, significantly, this line of argument has yet to be brought to bear in sustained fashion upon the specific claims of human mastery and superiority marshalled at the site of the factory farm: how might we carefully and thoughtfully "dehumanize," again to use Pick's provocative terminology (*Creaturely* 6), the humanist claims of the factory farm?

On the other hand of the double movement I am tracing here, and in a manner that is inextricable from the project to deconstruct human assertions of mastery, there is a continual call to apprehend nonhuman life with a critical attitude that remains fundamentally open to a multitude of possibilities, both recognizable and unknowable, rather than reiterating the tendency to presume the contours and capacities of animal life in advance. Of course, advancements in zoological science and an increased general interest in animal rights continue to yield the widespread recognition of a growing list of animal traits and abilities that were previously presumed to be the sole possession of human beings, from

language to tool use. Yet the posthumanist strain of animal studies contributes invaluably to this growing appreciation of animal life by stressing that animal value and experience is ultimately irreducible to even the broadest set of ascertainable qualities shared and valued by humans—not least because as Calarco argues, in line with animal studies' more modest view of the human capacity to know others, it is necessary "always to proceed agnostically and generously, as if we might have missed or misinterpreted the Other's trace" ("Toward" 81). It is a matter, then, not only of extending human achievements to other animals, but of embracing the possibility of a shared humility and vulnerability, including the fact that we will at least partly always be opaque to each other, and that even the most basic "human" accomplishments such as language are based in "possibilities or necessities, without which there would be no language, [that] *are themselves not only human*" (Derrida and Nancy 285). What results from the double movement of animal studies I have been tracing here is not an undifferentiated mass of interspecies life, but rather a shift from what Derrida calls "the limit that we have had a stomachful of, the limit between Man with a capital *M* and Animal with a capital *A*" (*Animal* 29), to a critical perspective that embraces "complicating, thickening, delinearizing, folding, and dividing the line precisely by making it increase and multiply" (29). I argue that this shift helps us to reassess the site of the factory farm more thoroughly, by exponentially expanding the ethical stakes of that site's radically attenuated definition of animal life. Rather than deeming the reconsideration of the factory

farm complete once we have "added back" this human-shared quality or that—recognizing and addressing the animal's capacity to feel pain, for instance—a posthumanist perspective on the factory farm's definition of animal life yields the conclusion that the question of justice is left irrevocably open by the deeply asymmetrical power relations we have instituted there.

Here, then, I have already invoked the third preoccupation of animal studies that relates to my thesis: the double movement to deconstruct humanism ultimately sheds new critical light on the fact that current human-animal power relations are anything but natural or preordained; instead, they are only effectively legitimized by the tautological assertions of humanism, and its limited definitions of both human and animal life. As Wolfe argues:

> humans and animals may share a fundamental 'non-power at the heart of power,' may share a vulnerability and passivity without limit as fellow living beings, but what they do *not* share equally is the power to materialize their misrecognition of their situation and to reproduce that materialization in institutions of exploitation and oppression whose effects are far from symmetrical in species terms. (*What* 95)

In other words, the deconstruction of humanism enables us to see and analyze more clearly both the specific consequences of human-animal power relations for human and animal life, and the disproportionate effect of those relations upon animal life in particular. Therefore, posthumanist critique also provides an important ground for focusing our critical efforts on the human-animal relationship, beyond mere affective attachments to animals, or the desire to extend the protections of humanism to yet another group of beings without interrogating why those protections are differentially applied in the first place. As Calarco

notes, analyzing power relations from this posthumanist position enables us to interrogate the problem at hand in a way that acknowledges that "[c]ontemporary ethical discourse and practice do not take place in a vacuum, but emerge from out of a series of background practices and beliefs that have placed the interests of most animals outside the scope of moral and political considerability" ("Toward" 81). In short, it makes sense to focus our critical efforts on the plight of non-human animals, because as Pick argues, "the human-animal distinction constitutes an arena in which relations of power operate in their exemplary purity (that is, operate with the fewest moral or material obstacles)" (*Creaturely* 1). Significantly, then, focusing on interspecies power relations from a posthumanist vantage point potentially deepens our understanding of how both human and animal life are rendered by power—a possibility that only further validates my dissertation's focus on the factory farm, which arguably performs the most intensified exertion of human power over animal life.

On the subject of power, of course, my analysis is also informed by discourses on power that largely circulate, at present, beyond the discourse of animal studies; specifically, my thesis participates in the ongoing critical discussion on biopower and biopolitics. As I explore in Chapter One, the factory farm is a prime expression of biopower, or the operation of power that Foucault famously designates as the propeller of modern efforts to assure the perpetuation of a given living population. As Foucault argues, contemporary biopower works in two interlinked ways: in the name of regularizing and securitizing life, it both

marks the refinement and dispersion of mechanisms of knowing and control, and is the occasion for the forceful exclusion of forms of life that are deemed unworthy of living. Yet despite the fact that Wolfe remarks in *What is Posthumanism?* that "[f]or biopolitical theory, the animality of the human becomes a central problem—perhaps *the* central problem—to be produced, controlled, or regulated for politics in its distinctly modern form" (100), most theorizations of biopolitics currently remain human-focused. Certainly, there are exceptions; for instance, in *Animal Capital*, Shukin insightfully theorizes how interspecies biopower is represented in the field of cultural production, and productively links these representations to the epistemic force of capitalism. Moreover, as I will discuss in the first chapter, in *The Open: Man and Animal*, Giorgio Agamben explicitly examines the role of animality in the logic of biopower, outlining how the distinction between humanity and animality operates conceptually as the "intimate caesura" within man that makes it possible for biopower to draw the line delineating which life and lives are worthy of protection (15). It is in conversation with both Shukin and Agamben, then, that I develop my account in this thesis of biopower's particular operation on the factory farm. I argue that a neoliberal biopolitics draws the protective line on the factory farm, defining worthy life—either human or animal—as that which can survive at all in an atomized environment of utter competition and commodification. Further, as I argue in Chapters Two and Three, the definition of life articulated in this iteration of biopolitics haunts our cultural negotiations of the factory farm: even narratives

that seek to explain the factory farm in alternative terms, such as Temple Grandin's rendering of ecological symbiosis, and even outright rejections of the factory farm's definition of life that are found, for instance, in vegetarian identity politics, are informed in significant ways by the logic of life articulated by the neoliberal biopolitics that holds sway on the factory farm.

As I noted at the outset of this introduction, however, in this thesis I am also interested in reading both the factory farm and our responses to it in terms of their specifically pedagogical dimensions. In what ways does the biopolitical orientation of the factory farm comprise an education about life, and how do we negotiate, reproduce, and transform these lessons in the public sphere? In striving to answer such questions, my thesis draws upon the discourse of critical pedagogy—again, like biopolitics, a critical context that is ripe for more engagement with the "animal question." Critical pedagogy takes seriously the political aspects of education: in tandem with broader aims of cultural studies, critical pedagogy articulates the ongoing need to interrogate the construction and perpetuation of normalized knowledges and their relationship to structures of power throughout culture, not just in schools. As Henry Giroux argues, this line of inquiry is concerned with the process by which members of a society could conceivably "become critical agents actively questioning and negotiating the relationship between theory and practice, critical analysis and common sense, and learning and social change" ("Is There" 185-86). As such, the field is committed to the invigoration of a public sphere that would invite collective, self-reflexive

questioning of taken-for-granted relationships with ourselves and others, thus renewing a praxis-based vision of democracy that resists the current cultural tendency to figure the social field as merely an aggregate of competing individuals. In other words, the discourse of critical pedagogy offers a critical approach that is well suited to locating and grasping both the limitations and the ethical and political stakes of the factory farm's radically limited framing of life, and of current modes of negotiating animal ethics in the public sphere.

The overall arc of the thesis extends outward from the pedagogical and biopolitical site of the factory farm, to an analysis of popular, ostensibly alternative explanations for the factory farm found in Temple Grandin's rhetoric and arguments, followed by an exploration of the dominant strain of cultural resistance to factory farm pedagogy represented by public discourses of vegetarianism. The thesis begins with the factory farm because a key wager of my argument is that the constitutive logics of factory farming, emerging as they do at what is arguably the most concentrated intersection of neoliberal economics, science, and biopower, structurally inform all of our current discourses on human and animal life. This may seem a hyperbolic claim, but upon investigation, it becomes clear that what we do at the factory farm is a particularly concentrated microcosm of the biopolitical dynamics of selective protection that are evident everywhere—even in forms of politics that explicitly renounce factory farming, as the sacrificial need to secure one's own purity in certain discourses of vegetarianism indicates. Certainly, I am not arguing that all politics is reducible to

the projects of selective protection that recur throughout culture and this thesis—immunization, sacrifice, othering, and so on. Rather, I am attempting to illustrate the need for generating genuinely alternative orientations to questions of ethics and politics, especially regarding the foundational question of the animal, whose originary position in our discourses of ethics and politics seems to render the process of rethinking what it should mean to be human in the world as being so "impossible, yet necessary," as Derrida might say.

The first chapter delineates the framing of life entailed in neoliberal biopolitics. I argue that the structures and practices of the factory farm model a dramatically winnowed definition of both human and animal life. Survival is predicated solely upon one's ability to consume; all other potential features of a life are rendered disposable. Along these lines, I take up the figure of zombie existence, which Giroux has recently linked to the logic of neoliberalism. Animal life on the factory farm is utterly reduced, from the perspective of biopower, to the commodifiable aspects of life that are, in fact, fuelled solely by the animal's capacity for consumption—converting feed into muscles, eggs, and milk. Likewise, the factory farm models a zombie frame for apprehending human life, too: we become locked into the continually intensified consumption that figuratively and materially insures our financial and physical survival under the terms of neoliberalism. This zombie rationale, I argue, goes some distance in explaining our infamously grotesque, and otherwise irrational, acceleration and intensification of production at the site of the factory farm. The chapter explores

several key means by which the factory farm performatively articulates a zombie pedagogy of neoliberal biopolitics, including the standardized practices of killing, the logics of insurance and immunization, the mechanisms by which animal life is "optimized," and the constitutive terms of the few animal welfare measures that are applied in factory farming. In short, despite repeated signs that both human and animal life can never finally be contained or encompassed by the pedagogical frame of neoliberal biopolitics, I maintain that efforts to assert this narrow definition of life are not merely *found* at the site of the factory farm, but *constitute* that site in a fundamental way.

In the second chapter, I address some popular narratives of cultural pedagogy that attempt to situate the factory farm within intelligible contexts that would seem to exceed the narrow terms of the factory farm, like ecology, philosophy, and spirituality. To this end, I take up the language and logic of author and factory farm designer Temple Grandin. In her best-selling, explicitly pedagogical books about her work with farm animals, Grandin relies upon certain iterations of ecological symbiosis, scientifically inflected narratives of human and animal epistemology, and the conceptual apparatus of sacrifice in order to legitimize her involvement with an institution that is responsible for the suffering and deaths of the animals she loves. I argue that although each of these rational frameworks appears to provide a basis for reconfiguring the factory farm's narrow definition of life, ultimately, when marshalled in support of factory farming, the terms of each of these frameworks prove amenable to being manipulated in a way

that renders them complicit with the neoliberal biopolitics of the factory farm. For instance, "symbiosis" only describes the factory farm insofar as the predator-prey dynamic is emphasized and essentialized; comparative epistemology girds the interspecies relationship on the factory farm only to the extent that animal minds are presumed to solely experience life on a moment-to-moment basis; and a spiritual reversion to the ritual of sacrifice only reinscribes the neoliberal biopolitical logic that immunizes the human against the animal by gleaning "meaning" for humanity out of animal death. My aim in this chapter is twofold: first, I want to complicate our notions of cultural pedagogy as it relates to the factory farm, emphasizing the fact that we are far from silent with each other on the topic, and that we enlist a wide range of conceptual frameworks and narratives in our effort to make sense of our current farming practices. Second, I want to point to the considerable influence of the lessons articulated by the factory farm upon those discussions, identifying the ways that such lessons emerge in and through narratives that do not initially appear to have anything to do with neoliberal biopolitics.

With this second point especially in mind, the third chapter focuses on aspects of cultural pedagogy that explicitly reject the factory farm as a legitimate institution. Specifically, I examine the current popular representation of vegetarianism. How does vegetarian cultural pedagogy both reinscribe and challenge the neoliberal biopolitics of the factory farm? Drawing on critical animal studies' insights into the sacrificial basis of human subjectivity, I analyze

some prominent examples of popular vegetarian pedagogy, including specific advertisements by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, bringing into relief their tendency to employ vegetarian identity politics in a way that foregrounds the pursuit of a certain human purity. In this respect, I argue, vegetarian pedagogy evidently reinscribes the biopolitical orientation to other animals that it claims to reject. In the remainder of the chapter, then, I explore what it might mean to begin framing vegetarianism or veganism in critical pedagogical terms that de-emphasize the immunizing promise of purity, in favour of embracing ethical eating as a constitutively incomplete effort.

After all, I am committed to interrogating the extremely forceful drives for knowledge and power that propel and are propelled by the factory farm not in order to declare our fate sealed, but rather with the aim of clearing critical paths for new investigations of heretofore unknown and unrecognized possibilities for all relationships, especially the highly consequential relationship between human and nonhuman animals. As such, this thesis calls for a critical pedagogical orientation to the factory farm; however, it is also designed to be an instance of the very pedagogy for which it calls: in its tracing of the factory farm's lessons about life *as* lessons that may be taken up and re-directed, this thesis participates in a critical animal pedagogy to come.

Chapter One: The Neoliberal Biopolitics of the Factory Farm

"In relation to [animals], all people are Nazis," writes Holocaust survivor Isaac Bashevis Singer; "for the animals it is an eternal Treblinka" (271). For several years, I have been trying to work with this warning from another time, this provocative call for a collective recognition of the deep links between different sites of atrocity. This call is not straightforward; certainly, though, it has everything to do with justice, with the imperative not to repeat or perpetuate the belatedly recognized injustices of the past. Specifically, the call asks us to apprehend, to learn to see, the similarities between the un-thought common sense of current institutions and the now-obvious crimes of past ones, so that we might begin to address and work away from the ethical failures that permeate our own actions. Already, the call is complicated: we are to learn to act differently, yet by what means? What might we seize upon in the comparison that will help us to theorize and live an alternative to the atrocities found at both sites, or at any two or more sites of atrocity that we might compare? The call, then, also has everything to do with pedagogy: what exactly do we learn from atrocity, not only in its aftermath—which is perhaps the most common focus of this kind of question—but also from the education that springs out of the site itself, an education that is articulated in and through very unfolding of violence? This chapter takes up the factory farm as an intrinsically pedagogical site, one that models particular lessons for us about human and animal life.

In order to lay the groundwork for understanding the factory farm as a teaching apparatus of sorts, I cannot yet leave aside Singer's analogy. There are at least two educational paths through such an almost unthinkable comparison. The immediate mode of learning takes place in our apprehension of the visual and visceral similarities between the Holocaust and the factory farm: look at all the ill-treated beings, look at all the deaths. They are the same in their brutal production of corpses. Martin Heidegger infamously participated in this brand of thinking, or non-thinking, about the two sites at hand, remarking that "[a]griculture is now a mechanized food industry. As for its essence, it is the same thing as the manufacture of corpses in the gas chambers and the death camps…" (qtd. in Levinas 487). Emmanuel Levinas cites Heidegger's remarks as being "beyond commentary" (487). However, I am convinced that in other cases, certain spectacular assertions of similarity between injustices signal a rather earnest hope: that by means of this mode of pedagogy, we will question the justness of the second site, based on our agreement that the first was deeply wrong. Yet as theorists of the media, pedagogy, and trauma continue to argue, the very immediacy of this brand of pedagogy compromises its ability to sufficiently open up the process of critical questioning, which stands as the sole reason to make such a comparison in the first place. In the shock of the spectacle—an instantaneous form of visceral, visual representation that as Henry Giroux suggests, "appeal[s] to the unmediated 'truth-effects' of images" ("Consuming" 81)—critical comparisons of structural conditions, as well as of the significant

differences and similarities between sites, tend to be foreclosed. These pedagogical shortcomings are certainly evident in the oversimplified, spectacularized iteration of "the comparison" set forth, for example, by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) in their notorious "Holocaust on Your Plate" exhibit, wherein photos of factory farming and concentration camp conditions are captioned with the assertion that "To Animals, All People Are Nazis" (Mika 924). As the overwhelmingly negative cultural response to the exhibit suggested,[5] the exhibit seemed to shut down more critical questioning than it encouraged.

What might the second pedagogical path offer us then, in terms of critical deliberation, interrogation, transformation? Here I am referring to an education that reflexively seeks to understand the pedagogical underpinnings of atrocity, rather than merely hoping to gain insight from looking at its spectacular results. In what particular ways does the lesson articulated by any given site of atrocity model what David L. Clark calls, following Levinas and in response to Heidegger's unthinking conflation, "the murderous indifference to difference by which alterities are compelled to be *im Wesen dasselbe* ["in essence the same"]"

[5] The national director of the Anti-Defamation League, Abraham Foxman, said of the exhibit that "[r]ather than deepen our revulsion against what the Nazis did to the Jews, the project will undermine the struggle to understand the Holocaust and to find a way to make sure such catastrophes never happen again" (qtd. in Teather), which would be the exact opposite effect to one we might hope for under conditions of critical pedagogy. Many other members of the Jewish community were similarly offended (Newkirk, Shafran). Likewise, Mika notes in her study of a focus group's reactions to PETA material that the reaction to the "Holocaust on Your Plate" image was broadly "visceral, immediate, strong and negative" (931).

(172)?[6] I am interested, in other words, in what we might gain by reflecting more fully upon the lack of recognition I have already mentioned—the apparent inability or reticence to see atrocity and injustice as such while it is happening, and when *we* are implicated in its unfolding. Here I do not primarily focus upon an individual's psychological resistances to and defenses against apprehending the factory farm as a site of injustice—though these are certainly worthy of sustained critical attention, not least because I suspect that these responses or non-responses form a significant obstacle to the collective interrogation of the structural conditions that I do take as my focus in this chapter. Instead, a central premise of mine is that the lack of consideration found at sites of violence is not reducible to a mere absence of care, but instead emerges out of a particular constellation of logics, relations, and conditions that model a foreclosure of consideration, or even of the rumblings of critical thought that might lead to certain forms of consideration. In other words, in this chapter I am interested in identifying the pedagogical force of the sites themselves: How do the operating logics of sites of atrocity—specifically here, the site of the factory farm—teach us to frame the lives of others? Which normative, positive definitions of life do such sites figure forth for all of us, and which possibilities are thus excluded from consideration? How and to what extent do such sites teach us to think and not to think—critically, ethically? From this perspective, sites of violence like the factory farm and the concentration camp have far more in common than the seemingly

[6] Translation in original. All italics original unless noted.

obsessive production of corpses, which in this light may come to be legible as the *product* of a certain education, rather than as a spectacular "lesson" that begins and ends in critical paralysis.

If we are getting an education from the factory farm, then, what kind of education is it? Elaborating an answer to that question is the focus of this chapter: I argue that the factory farm expresses a neoliberal biopolitics of life that schools us to strip down and re-direct our apprehension of the lives of others in particular ways. Again, there is more at work here than our collective turning aside or distraction from the possibility of thinking food animals otherwise, though this cultural tendency is undoubtedly rampant.[7] Instead, my primary focus is to identify the ways that we are actively, positively schooled into conceiving of animal life within the extremely limited coordinates of a neoliberal biopolitical frame: a frame so limited, in fact, that ironically it offers more of a tutelage in *not* thinking, than in thinking—with everything outside the prescribed frame rendered as being utterly disposable.

First, then, what does a "neoliberal biopolitical frame" consist of? Here, I am clearly invoking Foucault's well-known effort to distinguish the

[7] For instance, the commodity fetish status of "food" that is applied to animal products plays a powerful role in obfuscating the human-animal biopower that is marshalled to produce that commodity. Moreover, on the part of large food corporations, I have noticed a recent emphasis upon food-related social experiences as a form of commodity fetish. Pizza Hut's recent advertising campaign, for instance, extols its pizza as the key to memorable experiences, with milestone events inscribed on the interior of the pizza box. Likewise, McDonalds' most recent television advertising campaign links individual ingredients with the pleasurable experience of nostalgia and other social meanings: "What type of beef do we use in our burgers? It's the type of beef your grandma built a reputation on" (McDonalds). Certainly, this approach presents an alternative strategy for corporations that cannot as easily participate in the dominant rhetoric in vogue among food advertisers, entailing a rather sanitized and selective, if overt, focus upon "natural ingredients" and "knowing where your food comes from."

characteristics of modern power: "[s]overeignty took life and let live. And now we have the emergence of a power [biopower] that I would call the power of regularization, and it, in contrast, consists in making live and letting die" (*Society* 247). Biopolitics, in other words, emerges as a political framework for the power that concerns itself with maintaining the overall, continual health and life of a given population. Yet in grasping this general orientation of biopolitics, we should not underestimate what Jeffrey Nealon calls the "intensity" of biopower: insofar as biopower represents the ultimate "lightening, saturation, becoming-more-efficient, and transversal linkage of existing practices" (38) that constrain, enable, and regularize the social field of the living, the profound reach of the normalizing, ubiquitous apparatus we identify as "biopower" becomes clearer. "In other words," Nealon argues, "power regulates *relations*, not *objects*, precisely because if power can successfully regulate the relations, it gets the objects for free—there are no 'natural' or essential objects or persons that somehow exist 'before' power relations" (38). The contemporary expressions of power that "make live," it would seem, are indeed "intense," perhaps more so than the power expressed in the sovereign's direct threat of death against the transgressor, or the panoptical enforcement of discipline. Instead, as Thomas Lemke argues, in a context of biopower "[n]ature is not a material substratum to which practices of government are applied but the permanent correlative of those practices" (5). Ostensibly, everything about life now constitutively falls within the purview of biopower.

Biopower is undoubtedly an elastic, multifaceted complex of practices and relations, and I do not wish to claim otherwise. Along these lines, I take note of Nealon's caution against misreading the exercise of biopower as being reducible to the intentional project of a locatable, dominating sovereign: "[in Foucault's model] totalization comes about as an effect, if it does at all, not simply or primarily because of some centralized intention or design to totalize or dominate, but rather through the intense saturation of certain modes or practices" (100). To be sure, the factory farm embodies a particularly intense, almost totalizing expression of biopower. Yet far from distorting our understanding of biopower, I argue that analyzing such an extreme, saturated expression of the "modes or practices" of biopolitics and neoliberalism that are currently rife throughout contemporary culture potentially yields the *clearest* picture of how those modes and practices work pedagogically, as a primer for how we are and "should be" framing life at the present moment. Crucially, death and dominance hardly disappear as mechanisms of power under the biopolitical regime; instead, Foucault argues that biopower "does not exclude disciplinary technology, but it does dovetail into it, integrate it, modify it to some extent, and above all, use it by sort of infiltrating it, embedding itself in existing disciplinary techniques" (*Society* 242). Moreover, the biopolitical project does not merely enlist older, violent forms of power at the "micro" or logistical level of implementation, but also installs a lethal register of power within the very scaffold of its normative mandate. As Foucault illustrates with reference to the conceptual apparatus of

Nazi biopower, the *raison d'etre* for the exercise of lethal power is now structurally inscribed in and through the impetus to protect life. To this end, a certain instrumental form of racism emerges, a racism that

> justifies the death-function in the economy of biopower by appealing to the principle that the death of others makes one biologically stronger…The specificity of modern racism, or what gives it its specificity, is not bound up with mentalities, ideologies, or the lies of power. It is bound up with the technique of power…We are dealing with a mechanism that allows biopower to work. (258)

As a flipside of its avowed commitment to securing and maintaining the life of a population, then, it becomes clear that biopolitics also contains an intrinsically political and pedagogical rationale for death dealing—one that is perhaps initially more immune to mainstream critical interrogation in some respects than the old sovereign grounds for killing, because the biopolitical justification hinges not merely on the preservation of the sovereign's life, but upon securing the lives of everyone who counts; the lives that anxiously constitute "us." This kind of racism, in other words, provides a means of immunizing the lives that are deemed to matter against all other life: as I will argue throughout this chapter, this immunizing discrimination takes many forms and is absolutely central to the pedagogical project of neoliberal biopolitics.

Already we can see one potential index of critical comparison between the concentration camp and the factory farm. At both sites, Foucault's analysis of biopolitics renders intelligible how it becomes possible to frame killing, pedagogically, as being vital to the preservation of life. Yet the biopolitical differences between the sites are also significant for gaining a sense of what kind

of pedagogy is articulable through violence. We are now familiar with the biopolitical discourse of racial purity that underwrote the concentration camp, as well as numerous other acknowledged sites of racist exclusion; on the factory farm, though, the biopolitical justification for killing differs: the "racial" (or speciesist) mechanism of exclusion is undoubtedly similar, but the elimination of this latter class of beings is deemed nutritionally necessary for the biological strengthening of the (human) population that matters, in a way that tends to obscure any reliance upon racially based malice. In other words—and leaving aside for the moment the undeniable fact that speciesism is simply more widely accepted as "common sense" than the various forms of racism it nevertheless informs—it is perhaps difficult to see factory farm killings as biopolitical precisely because "the political" tends to fade from view in certain discourses of consumption, as I will elaborate below with reference to the "zombie" quality of contemporary neoliberal biopolitics. We may be accustomed to interpreting Nazi racism, after the fact, in terms of biology's extrapolation into normative, symbolic, and political rhetorics of purity and health, yet we tend to frame the killing of animals in the barest apolitical terms of biological need. Of course, if it is arguably the case that all atrocities are carried out under the banner of "apolitical" necessity, then the factory farm should raise a red flag for us. I certainly do not wish to imply that the factory farm and the concentration camp are separated only by different degrees of historical consciousness, but rather that both sites are marked, during their operation, by an imperative to proceed with the

murderous exclusion of others without interrogating the potential political reasons for doing so. Undoubtedly, the Nazi regime had to educate its citizens to view the Final Solution in terms of apolitical, biological need: as Adorno argues in "Education After Auschwitz," this education included what he calls a "hardening" of subjectivity against acknowledging both one's own pain and the pain of others (6). In short, I maintain that the pedagogical imperative in biopolitical regimes to think in extremely limited terms about life, with its accompanying injunction never to think outside those terms, is primarily what ties the concentration camp and the factory farm together.

The factory farm, however, unfolds in a context of neoliberalism that deeply informs contemporary biopolitical processes, involving important updates and re-castings of biopower's prevailing lesson plans on how to consider human and animal life. Yes, factory farming continues in a context that remains informed both by the Holocaust and its biopolitical antecedents; but at the same time, factory farming is also the product of everything that has happened in North America and its globalizing neoliberal mission in the time that has unfolded roughly since the Holocaust, in a context that is not divorced from, but is also hardly reducible to, the cultural context of the Holocaust. Of course, the effort on the part of economic elites to commodify and expropriate the labour of certain populations has been occurring for decades and centuries. Yet "neoliberalism" represents a quantitative intensification of the logic and *modus operandi* of capitalism, with effects that are both qualitative and tantamount to a difference in

kind from previous forms of life under capitalism. David Harvey describes this twentieth-century shift as one characterized by an intensification of what he calls "accumulation by dispossession," consisting of a deep commitment to privatization and commodification, the speculative financialization of everything, expropriation through crisis creation and management, and state redistributions that benefit private corporations (*Brief* 160-63). All of these characteristics of neoliberalism pervade the North American farming industry: Farm Aid notes that the number of farms in America has shrunk by five million since the 1930s ("The Issues"), as vast agricultural conglomerates continue to consolidate and concentrate the practice of farming to unprecedented levels, supported by preferential governmental subsidies. Within the farms, too—and this, of course, is the primary subject of discussion in this chapter—farmed animals are increasingly subject to the neoliberal imperatives of insuring, maximizing, and optimizing commodity value. The capitalist fantasy of unlimited growth, which as Harvey notes, now relies heavily on the neoliberal intensifications of accumulation by dispossession, is legible in the cracked reflection of factory-farmed animal bodies—in their exponentially inflated numbers, their grotesquely accelerated lives, and their artificially distended muscles. Along these lines, Bob Torres notes in *Making a Killing* that "[w]hile it is certainly the case that animal exploitation could exist without capitalism, the structure and nature of contemporary capital has deepened, extended, and worsened our domination over animals and the natural world" (11). Torres convincingly traces, along more or less post-Marxist

lines, contemporary capitalism's accumulative intensification of its commodification of the animal, which renders farm animals into "superexploited living commodities" (39) in direct proportion to capitalism's increasingly concentrated ability to exploit the animal's body and labour.

While the neoliberal conversion of animals into "superexploited living commodities" is certainly underway in full force, it is crucial to recognize that our appreciation of this fact hardly encompasses the full extent of the factory farm's neoliberal biopolitical education. For instance, we must grasp the profound stakes of the biopolitical dimensions of neoliberalism: keeping in mind Lemke's observation that the relations of biopower constitutively articulate the field of life, rather than merely acting upon a life that is "out there," it becomes clear that unlike more classical Marxist theories of commodification, neoliberalism as biopolitics does not structurally envision a space for life outside its purview, other than the immanent position of mere disposability. As Jean Comaroff argues of the "imploding history of biocapital," "the manner in which subjectivity, sexuality, pathology, and citizenship are inflected more and more tightly by the logic of the commodity in both its productive and dystopic forms…is integral to the ways in which the substance of human [and, I would suggest, animal] existence itself can be objectified, regulated, and struggled over" (213). Significantly, then, as a mode of biopolitics—as a normative framework for "making live"—neoliberalism teaches us not only how to locate value in others as commodities, but also positively inscribes and legitimizes the shutting down of all other possible ways

of seeing those others. Therefore, an account of neoliberal biopolitics is woefully incomplete without an apprehension of its emphasis upon the inherent disposability of most life. As Giroux asserts, "[b]iopolitics in its currently brutalizing neoliberal form inscribes into its power relations the logic of redundancy and disposability in order to eliminate all vestiges of the social contract, the welfare state, and any other public sphere not governed by the logic of profit or amenable to the imperatives of consumerism" (*Stormy* 28). Significantly, racism's role as a lynchpin for the lethal register of biopower does not disappear with neoliberalism; instead, mass disposability signals neoliberalism's ability to perpetuate historical, structural disadvantages under the ostensibly racially neutral—but effectively deadly—sign of economic non-viability.

Consequently, what emerges in neoliberal biopolitics is a rationale of relations between lives that models a zero-sum social field of radically winnowed worth on one hand and utter disposability on the other. Those lucky few that are still in the running to partake in the virtualized, virtually phantasmatic framework of value offered by neoliberal biopolitics remain caught in what Nealon describes as an obsessive effort not to fall into a condition of disposability:

> Finance capital creates not so much consumers as it does producers—all of us whoever we might be, have to produce and continually modulate value. Everything is a market. Although this clearly entails an intensified model of consumption, the very hyperintensity of that commodity consumption (the fact that anything 'outside' it or any distance from it is gone forever) inexorably mutates the act of consumption into an immanent mode of production…In other words, the 'problem' or difficulty of finance capital is not that we're all made into consumers (we have to be satisfied with

> what's on the menu, as Adorno put it), but that we're all made into producers (we have to produce the menu, then order from it—or be utterly unable to do so, should we be off the map of global capital flows). (66-67)

In other words, within the financialized framework of power relations that comprises neoliberal biopolitics, survival is available only to those with the resources to participate in an ever-intensifying cycle of production and consumption, while those lives "off the map" of this cycle are relegated to a zone of disposability—an experiential zone Achille Mbembe describes as marked by "the creation of *death-worlds*, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living dead*" (40). Here, both Nealon and Mbembe point to a social existence wherein life is framed solely in terms of consumptive capacity; in short, a zombie-like existence. Nealon gestures to a restless form of life that is understood to be successfully alive only to the extent that it compulsively generates a consumable landscape upon which to continually feed—this compulsive element of incessant generation becoming necessary in a world in which the physical "locating" of new markets has been more or less exhausted, yet in which consumption has become the only game in town. Mbembe, for his part, describes lives that are socially dead—disposable—under the terms Nealon describes, positioned by power relations as alive only to the extent that they can still consume, having lost or been denied the ability to produce. Along these lines, Giroux has recently explicitly linked neoliberal biopolitics to the concept of the zombie, arguing that the "central message [of zombie politics] seems to be that we

are all responsible for ourselves and that the war of all against all is at the core of the apocalyptic vision that makes zombie politics both appealing as a spectacle and convincing as a politics" (*Zombie* 33). Giroux outlines a social field in which economic and political elites are most akin to zombies in their drive to expropriate and dispossess everything they can from the populations they render disposable—while perpetuating a public pedagogy that fearfully projects zombie-like parasitism onto the victims of the system, whose "armies of disposable populations are condemned to roam the shattered American landscape with a blind and often unthinking rage" (32). In a similar fashion, Zygmunt Bauman implicitly suggests that there is a public pedagogy of zombification at work, in his assertion that responsibility for social improvement has now been "assigned to individual guts and stamina" (*Liquid Modernity* 29). Significantly, in the figure of the zombie, emphasis upon compulsive consumption goes hand in hand with the disposability of thought: when survival rests solely in "guts and stamina," thinking becomes superfluous.

The pedagogical frameworks of neoliberal biopolitics currently set forth by thinkers like Nealon, Mbembe, Comaroff, Giroux, and Bauman that gesture to a zombie-like, zero-sum, "eat or be eaten" cultural lesson in apprehending the lives of others have not yet been used to analyze the site of the factory farm; however, it is my wager that this kind of message about life actually saturates the factory farm, perhaps illustrating the unacknowledged central modeling force of

both the factory farm and the human-animal power relation for all contemporary articulations of neoliberal biopolitics.

So, how does the factory farm teach us to think of life as reducible to "guts" that live only to consume? In the remainder of the chapter, I will explore some of the specific mechanisms and practices through which the factory farm articulates this lesson, including the ways it kills animals, optimizes, maximizes, and insures the commodified aspects of animal life, and even how it frames the few animal welfare measures currently implemented on the farm. I will show how each of these approaches to animal life on the farm figure forth the radically limited frame of neoliberal biopolitics that I have been developing so far. In general, on one hand, the factory farm teaches us to think of animals as a population of zombies: at that site, animals literally live solely to consume, in that we only keep them alive until they have consumed the sufficient amount of nutritional inputs to produce market-weight muscles, or to reach optimum milk and egg-producing levels. Accompanying this one prescribed thought about animal life is the injunction that no other thoughts about animal life are necessary: possible alternative considerations of animal life become disposable in equal proportion to the material disposability of the potential, unknowable, or even obvious aspects of animal life that those alternative thoughts might have addressed. Moreover, on the other hand, the factory farm also helps school us to view our own, human lives in decidedly zombie-like terms. Along the lines of Nealon's description of neoliberal biopolitics—wherein we become convinced

that we must tread the water of intensifying productive consumption in order merely to stay afloat above the sea of disposability—on and around the factory farm I argue that we have come to feel locked into producing and consuming ever-higher volumes of animal product, regardless of health-related and environmental costs, and in a manner that is blind to any consideration except the single-minded pursuit of the slim profit margin and taste that we locate in the animal's protein-concentrating body. In this light, we, too, become zombies—perhaps the true zombies, in that we do not just live to consume, but also to compulsively make more zombies, both human and animal, in and through our acts of consumption. In our case, what the factory farm renders disposable is any consideration of how and why we might not want to consign ourselves to the continual, mindless consumption of what we produce at the factory farm—in short, rendered disposable is anything about ourselves that falls outside the frame of our supposedly blind, zombie-like hunger for meat and profit.

Obtaining a License

The first "teachable moment" in factory farm biopolitical pedagogy I want to explore in detail is the process of killing animals in the factory abattoir. By law in the United States and Canada, farmed animals must be stunned to the point of unconsciousness before they are killed. What does the act of stunning an animal prior to its "real" death accomplish? Specifically, how does the practice teach us to see life within the stripped-down frame of neoliberal biopolitics? The official

purpose of stunning an animal—usually by means of a captive bolt stunner delivering a blow to the head, though current-based electrical means are also used—is to provide a pain-free context for the often-lengthy process of exsanguination ("bleeding out") necessary for meat production. The notion that "humaneness," or our compassionate effort to eliminate the animal's experience of pain, is a primary explicit purpose of stunning is borne out by the fact that it was humane societies in Britain and America that fought for the implementation of such practices. Certainly, the legal enshrinement of these practices is significant in the general context of deregulation that is the hallmark of neoliberal institutions. Yet as I will argue more fully below in the section on welfare discourse, the state-supported protection from pain provided to the animal in the act of stunning is less an exception to neoliberal biopolitics, than it is a subtly complementary operation. For our purposes in this section, however, I focus upon the "non-welfare" aspects of the stunning/bleeding scenario in order to bring into sharper relief the biopolitical stakes of killing animals. In general, the practice of stunning figures a double legitimization: on one hand, stunning figuratively asserts a view of animal life as being *incidentally* disposable under the "making live" imperative of neoliberal productive consumption; and on the other, it models a perspective that insists animal life is *intrinsically* killable in the name of immunizing or "making live" the human population as a discernable group worthy of protection.

I will begin with the latter lesson of stunning: that animals are inherently killable. To make this point, it is useful to circle back to Foucault's contention that biopower now requires a license to kill under the terms of its otherwise-unwieldy mandate to make live—and that this license manifests in racism. As Foucault argues in *Society Must be Defended*, the concept of racism provides a means of "introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power's control: the break between what must live and what must die" (254). This mechanism, Foucault concludes, sustains the project of making live in two ways: first, by more clearly delineating which population of lives to focus upon; and second, by establishing a zero-sum relation between the racist elimination of those outside the fold, and the improved health of those within it. The logic is such that "the death of the bad race, of the inferior race (or the degenerate, or the abnormal) is something that will make life in general healthier: healthier and purer" (255). This logic clearly participates in a sacrificial economy, which as Jacques Derrida has convincingly argued throughout his later work on animals, is always ready to hand in our thoughts about animals. Not only are animals readily assimilable to the sacrificial framework due to the literal nourishment we have long learned is possible in bringing about their deaths, but the symbolic buttressing and immunizing of human strength that is supposedly achieved in differentiating the human from the animal through killing it is, as Derrida argues and as I will develop more fully in the next two chapters, a foundational element of human politics. In this light, speciesism may be productively read as an originary form of

the racism to which Foucault refers in his model of biopolitics. For these reasons, as I argue in the next chapter, Temple Grandin's call for a kind of redemptive "return" to sacrifice cannot succeed in overturning neoliberal biopolitics; and as I argue in the third chapter, the common insistence upon a pure vegetarian subjectivity founded in the "sacrifice" of one's meat eating is potentially more reactionary than truly transformative.

Returning to the stunning procedure, however, how is the speciesist license to kill pedagogically enforced for us in the act of stunning animals on the factory farm? The speciesist message of stunning pivots on the stripping of consciousness from the soon-to-be-killed animal. While conscious, the animal remains potentially provocative of a multitude of possible considerations at the heightened scene of death: after all, in our political discourse, we repeatedly frame the possession of consciousness as a baseline for inclusion in the category of lives we should be "making live."[8] To be sure, on the factory farm we are dealing with beings that we *have* made live up to this point; we have paid concerted biopolitical attention to their lives—to our ultimate ends, of course, but this instrumentalization does not completely obviate the fact that we have cultivated these lives and paid some kind of attention to them. Consequently, the ideally tidy

[8] The fact that human beings lacking consciousness are so often considered within political frameworks, yet in a way that must be explicitly asserted, with reference to other political concepts grounding consideration (eg. "moral patient" status, past or future prospects of consciousness, etc.), suggests that such marginal exceptions prove the general rule. Moreover, I certainly do not wish to imply that we consistently include all demonstrably conscious beings under the auspices of our ethical consideration, but usually, if a conscious person or animal is deemed to be disposable or killable, the fact of their consciousness must be effaced or ignored, and/or other reasons for their exclusion must be marshalled that are asserted as overriding the individual's possession of consciousness in some ostensibly meaningful way.

matter of discerning who matters and who may be eliminated under the terms of biopower needs to be made clearer at the scene of death, and stunning provides some clarity on that score by eliminating the troublesome element of too-obvious consciousness.

Yet the animal's consciousness does not only raise the troubling possibility that we should ethically include the animal in the effort to make live: in the context of competitive biopower, animal consciousness can also symbolically represent a threat to "our" well-being. In this reading, if animal consciousness signals the animal's similarity to us, it becomes easier to perceive the animal as a competing consumer; a zombie threat that must be eliminated in the effort to preserve our own lives. From this perspective—perhaps seemingly far-fetched, but wholly in line with fear-based logics of racist exclusion and genocidal annihilation—the act of stunning purges both the perceived threat posed by animal consciousness, and the necessity to interrogate any of the possible implications of animal consciousness that I have just identified, ranging from the ethical to the paranoid. The elimination of consciousness through stunning thus both frames animal life for us as being definitively reducible to nonhuman "guts," and systematically removes any need to think of the animal in any way other than as a being that may be legitimately killed. At a potentially messy scene, we have now immunized ourselves against both the animal and against too much thought, and thus the stripped-down, neoliberal biopolitical frame remains intact.

Moreover, stunning helps to situate this prescribed frame within the larger rubric of sacrifice that, as I have mentioned, is so central to the human-animal relation. As I have argued with regard to the possession of consciousness, stunning removes the suspicion that we are dealing with anything other than a life comprised of consumptive "guts": after stunning, there is only the calm dispatch of pulsating biology left to carry out. Significantly, though, here the symbolic sacrificial payoff of animal killing remains: we may think of ourselves as strengthened through the elimination of the animal, yet without the potentially disquieting sense, on the ground and in the moment, that the sacrificial price for this strength consists of the killing of a life that was tantamount to *more* than mere guts. Along these lines, Hugo Reinert contends:

> Hence the apparent contradiction: a genocide or mass extermination may well operate through sacrificial calculations at the aggregate level—'they must die so that we can live'—but individual acts of killing that compose it must be routine and inconspicuous; that is, they must not possess the character of a sacrifice—exalted, significant, extra-mundane. In the modern slaughterhouse, this is precisely what the act of slaughter has become: impersonal, efficient, routinized, disaggregated into myriad specific operations; in short, an anti-sacrifice. (par. 28)

In other words, stunning allows us to have our biopolitical cake and eat it too: the winnowed frame of consideration stays the same—we are charged only with seeing the animal as a member of the disposable living dead, alive only to the extent it consumes—yet simultaneously, and unthinkingly, we also attain the sacrificial benefit of having drawn the Foucaultian line, and eliminated what was on the other side. Through stunning, then, we learn that we are the winners in the

zero-sum game of productive consumption, at no cost, and with no further critical interrogation necessary.

By this point, readers of developments in biopolitical theory since Foucault will perhaps be wondering where the concept of "bare life" fits into the pedagogy of inherent killability I am articulating here. Is the stunned animal an example of bare life? This question is worth asking, especially since bare life's most prominent theorist, Giorgio Agamben, is one of the few major thinkers of biopolitics to attempt to apply biopolitical models to the question of the nonhuman animal, in his book *The Open: Man and Animal*. As is well known, Agamben revives Aristotle's concepts of *bíos* and *zoe*, using them to denote a conceptual binary comprised of political or "politically qualified" life, and mere biological life. In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Agamben recasts biopower as being founded, since ancient times, upon a separation of *bíos* and *zoe*: as a sovereign form of power whose supposed mandate is to shape a community of *bíos* —political lives to be protected and recognized—by excluding or "banning" other lives from consideration. Yet these lives are not merely excluded and thus left to their own devices; instead, Agamben situates his argument within the constitutive definition of biopolitics I outline above, by asserting that when we ban lives, we include them in our community in the mode of excluding them. Consequently, such lives are not figurable as merely an alternative *bíos* that we need not concern ourselves with, but rather as "bare life": pure *zoe* that in being included through exclusion, has been stripped of *bíos*.

Constitutively unrecognized politically (excluded), yet falling under the purview of power nonetheless (included), beings belonging to the category of "bare life" may be killed with impunity. In *The Open*, Agamben reproduces this framework in an interspecies context, arguing that what he calls the "anthropological machine" is the basic motor of bare life's production—a machine continually at work on "the production of man through the opposition man/animal, human/inhuman" (37). This machine of distinction is what produces bare life, Agamben argues, in that bare life necessarily occupies the zone of indistinction at the machine's centre. In other words, "man's" self-definition against animality opens a space of pure, ever-shifting "exception" between the two terms, or suspension of all political recognition of the life and/or lives that may fall into that interstitial space. Because animality is both internal and external to man, the potential for anyone to be designated as bare life is, Agamben suggests, the foundational and universal threat of Western politics.

How does the model of the anthropological machine square with the lessons about animal life articulated by the factory farm, its practice of stunning in particular? After all, like Agamben, here I have traced a biopolitical mechanism of exclusion that renders other animals as intrinsically killable. With regard to the specific practice of stunning, I have argued that the stripping of consciousness from the animal produces a being that appears to come close to a state of "pure biology" in a manner that resembles Agamben's concept of bare life, especially in that our perception of the animal's reduction to such a state seems to enable us to

frame the animal as more definitively killable. However, while I assert that stunning's supposed reduction of the animal to "pure biology" is an entirely historically contingent perception that pivots pedagogically on a particular collective interpellation of zombie politics, Agamben tends to posit bare life as a transhistorical category of life. In fact, as Laurent Dubreuil points out in his contribution to the special issue of *diacritics* on the work of Roberto Esposito—a theorist I take up below who also makes use of the concepts "*bíos*" and "*zoe*"—using these terms to denote a certain opposition between a constitutively political (and especially human) life and a mere biological existence is largely a modern interpretation and distillation of Aristotle's assertions. Dubreuil contends that the classical evidence for the clarity of distinction between the two terms is far lighter than contemporary theorists like Agamben seem to imply. Likewise, Lemke convincingly argues that Agamben's historical expansion of the age of biopolitics is problematic; that Foucault proves to be more precise in his designation of the origin of biopolitics in the eighteenth century due to the fact that "[o]nly with the appearance of modern biology was 'life' or the 'life force' granted an identity as an independent working principle that described the emergence, preservation, and development of natural bodies" (62). In this light, "bare life" as we understand it today, as an organic force conceivable as operating on its own organic terms independently of our recognition of its life—a concept upon which the imagery of zombie life also depends—would not be immediately translatable into the ancient context that Agamben emphasizes. Such historical and conceptual conflations

only support Lemke's argument, with regard to the concept of "bare life," that Agamben appears to rely upon a "quasi-ontological concept of biopolitics" that takes biological life as a kind of static object for politics (62). Likewise, Ernesto Laclau cautions Agamben and his readers that "*zoe* is primarily an abstraction" (17): a purely biological, non-relational life that exists on the other side of "politics" is a convenient conceptual invention of sovereign distinction making, and should be interrogated and assessed critically as such at every turn. Taken together, these problems suggest that stunned animal life is more properly legible as a contingent form of zombie life, caught up and losing ground in a complex web of zombie relations, than as an instantiation of pure "bare life."

In fact, the suitability of the designation "zombie life" over "bare life" for the stunned animal lies not only in the former term's closer attention to the specific historical and political circumstances of the animal. Additionally, the term is more accurate for what it implies about the human power that administers the stunning: whereas Agamben's model presumes a powerful sovereign—or a powerful sovereign population of humans, as in *The Open*—as the primary agent of rendering others into bare life, the neoliberal biopolitical model I am tracing throughout this chapter frames both humans and animals as zombie life in an essential sense: humans still have recourse to sovereign expressions of power, but only as vestigial speciesist instruments in their zombie struggle for survival under the constant pressure of neoliberal biopolitics. Consequently, speciesist, sovereign expressions of power remain omnipresent on the farm, but they do not tell the

whole story of the site's operation of biopower. Like the deadly, sovereignty-enforced racism that Foucault argues is a mechanism of biopower, our assertions that the animal is inherently killable *enable* the exercise of biopower on the farm—they do not define the entire relation or operation of biopower.

Along these lines, how does the practice of stunning not only help figure the inherent killability of animals, but also model *our own* constitution as a form of zombie life, by means of stunning's simultaneous—and thus rather peculiar—insistence that animal life is merely *incidentally* killable? In this reading, the act of stunning the animal is intelligible as merely the last of innumerable biopolitical interventions that seek to manipulate and massage valuable aspects of animal life toward the ends of productive capital, and thus of our zombie mode of survival. Any remainder of this process becomes merely the waste of the zombie project of keeping ourselves alive. Ultimately, the animal's death itself is figured here as being disposable—as disposable as the animal's blood, which, when released in the moments after stunning, is what produces death as a side effect of the multi-step biopolitical activity of "processing" the animal's body for sale. As Noelie Vialles renders the scene in *Animal to Edible*, the very act of killing a living being seems to disappear in stunning's division of killing into several steps:

> Indeed, the first man does not really kill, he anaesthetizes. The second (or third) does not really kill either; he bleeds an animal that is already inert and, in the terms that are in constant use, 'as if dead.' The result of dissociating death from suffering in this way is as follows: since anaesthesia is not really fatal and since painless (or supposedly painless) bleeding is not really killing, we are left without any 'real' killing at all. (qtd. in Shukin 159)

In *Animal Capital*, Nicole Shukin cites the above passage in order to support her suggestion that "the noncriminal putting to death of both humans and animals found a new institutional grounding in the deliverance from pain promised by electric shock" (158). Shukin cites this phenomenon as part of her larger argument linking the historical development of electricity with the cultural role of animals as "encod[ing] the innocent place of 'life itself' in biopolitical times" (179). Here, I take up Shukin's insight into the link between stunning and the "innocent place of 'life itself'" in terms of stunning's positioning of animal death as a mere side effect of the biopolitical project to make live the human population vis-à-vis the accelerated production of animal life. In other words, in both the displacement of violence and the effort to eliminate pain that form part of the logic of stunning, I discern an implicit claim that the animal's death is an unfortunate, yet necessary side effect of our neoliberal biopolitical effort to keep ourselves alive. On this reading of the practice, the key lesson we take away involves grasping the inescapability of our zombie-like drive to stay alive through the continual, compulsive production of consumable life: the animal's death is thus implicitly framed as instrumental and incidental. As Bauman argues, a fundamental premise of the neoliberal narrative of biopolitics is that "[u]nlike *homini sacri*, the 'lives unworthy of living,' the victims of order-building designs, they are not 'legitimate targets' exempted from the protection of law at the sovereign's behest. They are rather unintended and unplanned 'collateral casualties' of economic progress" (*Wasted* 39).

Yet how can a framing of animal life as mere collateral casualty of our zombie mode of life coexist with the framing of animal life I have outlined above, that animal life is intrinsically killable? Ultimately, I argue that while the two articulations emphasize different aspects of neoliberal biopolitics—one narrating the prescribed frame for seeing human life, the other, animal life—the two logics of stunning I have sketched here do not only coexist, but also mutually inform one another. Giroux's analysis of zombie biopolitics helps illustrate my point:

> There is more at stake here than the vengeful return of an older colonial fantasy that regarded the natives as less than human or the now-ubiquitous figure of the disposable worker as a prototypical by-product of the casino capitalist order—though the histories of racist and class-based exclusion inform the withdrawal of moral and ethical concerns from these populations. What we are currently witnessing in this form of zombie politics and predatory capitalism is the unleashing of a powerfully regressive symbolic and corporeal violence against all those individuals and groups who have been 'othered' because their very presence undermines the engines of wealth and inequality that drive the neoliberal dreams of consumption, power, and profitability for the very few. (*Zombie* 37)

Here, Giroux draws out the process by which "old" biopolitical mechanisms of exclusion—the many prejudices that have operated under the umbrella of Foucault's paradigm of biopolitical racism—are both compounded and effaced under the zombie mode of neoliberal biopolitics. Currently, we may be drawing the line of disposability according to ahistorical assessments of economic viability, but to the extent that histories of structural disadvantage have already cast certain populations beyond the pale of the new measuring stick, those populations—including the animal population I examine here—are now rendered

doubly disposable, their deaths pedagogically figured as both incidental and legitimate.

Before moving past the practice of stunning, it is worth lingering on the subject of what we potentially render disposable in animal life, lest my argument re-inscribe the blinders to animal life that I am attempting to theorize. To this end, it is worth revisiting Agamben's work, as much for what it leaves out as for what it includes. Matthew Calarco has observed that *The Open* "focus[es] entirely and exclusively on the effects of the anthropological machine *on human beings* and never explore[s] the impact the machine has on various forms of animal life" (*Zoographies* 102).[9] In a similar vein, Laurent Dubrueil warns in response to current theorizing on the *bíos*/*zoe* framework that "[l]ife surpasses the frame that 'authorizes' it" (95). In *The Open*, it is worth noting that Agamben does ultimately attempt to gesture beyond his own frame of authorized life, but he does so by simply calling for a cessation of the anthropological machine: "[t]o render inoperative the machine that governs our conception of man will therefore mean no longer to seek new—more effective or more authentic—articulations, but rather to show the central emptiness, the hiatus that—within man—separates man and animal, and to risk ourselves in that emptiness" (92). Yet in order to apprehend the scope of all the predictable and unpredictable aspects of animal life

[9] Dinesh Wadiwel compellingly makes a similar point concerning Agamben's omission of an analysis of the industrial slaughterhouse: "it is apparent that the spiritual home of biopolitics is not the concentration camp but the slaughterhouse. It is within this facility that life is measured, contained and extinguished with a monstrous potentiality that defies belief; where the slaughter of billions occurs within spheres of exception that are incorporated within the very heart of the civil space" (par. 33)

that we render disposable in neoliberal biopolitics, is it sufficient to merely cease making distinctions? Jenny Edkins argues that Agamben's call to halt the distinction machine entails "ironically, an embracing of the very indistinctions that sovereignty imposes in order to function" (72). To be sure, I assert that what Anat Pick calls Agamben's "farewell to ontology" ("Giorgio") does not appear to overturn or interrogate, but rather seems merely to *suspend* the framework that tells us we can presume animal life to consist of an inert, organic, substrate for a politics that we have hereby merely halted, not transformed. Is it not potentially more transformative to continue trying to apprehend the extent to which no anthropological machine of distinction will ever grasp the potentiality of all that it excludes? The extent to which accepting that there is no pure space outside biopolitics is *not* co-extensive with a conclusion that we can thus apprehend everything relevant about life within that field, presuming that everything we do not recognize consists of mere inert biology? Indeed, Derrida advocates for a breaking down of anthropocentrism that is grounded in a process not of simply ignoring the supposed limit between humans and other animals, but "in multiplying its figures, in complicating, thickening, delinearizing, folding, and dividing the line precisely by making it increase and multiply (*Animal* 29). This kind of orientation to the problem of the anthropological machine might bring us closer than Agamben does to an apprehension of the profound stakes of biopolitical disposability: we have hardly begun to identify all the myriad forms of animal life or even "*bíos*" that we could possibly recognize according to our

own limited terms of life, let alone admitted that such identifications will never paint a complete picture of animal life. Laclau suggests as much in his contention that Agamben's model unnecessarily reduces exclusion from *a particular* form of law, to the exclusion from *any* politics, any law: "I think that Agamben has not seen the problem of the inscribable/ uninscribable, of inside/outside, in its true universality" (15). In short, I wish to register that the problem of animal life exceeds our biopolitical calculations in ways we cannot even imagine; consequently, we can perhaps begin to see the factory farm as a kind of prime lens for apprehending the extent of neoliberal rationality's utter, *a priori* impoverishment of possibilities for the expression of life at all sites of imposed disposability.

Taking out Insurance on Meat-Bearing Life

Of course, the expression of neoliberal biopolitics that defines the factory farm is certainly not limited to the operation of the stun gun. In this section, I explore the pedagogical implications of the conceptual apparatus of financialized speculation that now underwrites animal life and death to such an unprecedented degree on the factory farm. I have mentioned some of the immunizing effects of neoliberal biopolitics—that it operates through protectively immunizing the population of concern from the perceived vital threat of disposable populations, and that the tools of this immunization include structural discrimination, and a zombie-like adherence to the productive consumption that weakly assures

neoliberal survival. The central premises of the pedagogy of neoliberal biopolitics that I have been tracking, too—the assertion of a specific, limited frame through which to apprehend life, the legitimized discouragement of other ways of thinking and seeing life—are certainly expressible in terms of a conceptual inoculation against alternative critical and ethical engagements with others. Here, I amplify my focus upon the paradigm of immunity, following the lead of the discourses I treat in depth in this section: animal health and insurance, the latter being the apparatus of financial immunity *par excellence*. I will examine three key problems of immunity found on the factory farm, and explore how they reinforce the factory farm's life lessons: the mass pre-emptive use of antibiotics on American factory farms, the recent culling of ten percent of the Canadian domestic hog population to shore up the financial prospects of Canadian hog farming, and the emergence of the "downer" category on intensive farms.

The concept of immunity is arguably crucial to any understanding of biopolitics. Roberto Esposito has recently argued that immunity is the heretofore-unacknowledged operative mechanism of biopolitics, serving as "an internal articulation, a semantic juncture" between the productive and destructive processes of power (46), because it finally provides an explanatory model for the mechanisms by which productive biopolitical power "dovetails" into destructive sovereign power—a model that Esposito suggests was not articulated clearly

enough by Foucault.[10] In response to Esposito, I assert that it is difficult *not* to see the immunitary register in Foucault's account of the structural racism of biopolitics with which I opened this chapter. While Foucault may not directly call it an immunization, his description of biopower's delineation of which lives to "make live" tracks immunitary discourse exactly: there is the definitional break introduced between lives, followed by a protective effort to kill off the lives on the other side, as well as an accompanying exposure, of the lives that matter, to potential death. Arguing of the Nazis, whom he notes "alone took the play between the sovereign right to kill and the mechanism of biopower to this paroxysmal point" (*Society* 260), Foucault asserts that "[e]xposing the entire population to universal death was the only way it could truly constitute itself as a superior race and bring about its definitive regeneration once other races had either been exterminated or enslaved forever" (260). To a lesser degree, Foucault continues, "this play [between extermination of others and self-exposure to extermination] is in fact inscribed in the workings of all States" (260).[11] Inadvertently, then, Esposito actually *helps* us read Foucault in explicit terms of immunity, in which the discriminatory exclusion of the disposable population from within the general population is akin to an immunological process that "saves, insures, and preserves the organism, either individual or collective, to

[10] Esposito argues of Foucault's dual model of sovereignty/biopower: "[h]eld between these two opposing possibilities and blocked in the aporia that is established when they intersect, Foucault runs simultaneously in both directions. He doesn't cut the knot, and the result is to keep his ingenious intuitions unfinished on the link between politics and life" (43).

[11] Immediately after this claim, Foucault remarks that it "perhaps" does not apply to all capitalist States, yet I cannot see why it would not apply to capitalist States, especially in the context of neoliberalism.

which it pertains, but it does not do so directly, immediately, or frontally; on the contrary, it subjects the organism to a condition that simultaneously negates or reduces its power to expand" (Esposito 46). In other words, it is seemingly possible to legitimate the preclusion of any given mutual obligation or entanglement with others by reference to a biologically intelligible need to immunize—protect—oneself.

Financial immunity articulates itself as a new and improved substitute of sorts for the biological immunity upon which it models itself. Speculative logic and its mechanism of immunity, insurance, replicate the biological immunitary interplay of protection and limited exposure, but in the spectral realm of imagined future exchanges. Gradually, as Ian Baucom argues in *Specters of the Atlantic*, modern economics has come to articulate a social imaginary in which the imagined ongoing and future value of a given enterprise overrides the current material value of the commodities and beings that initially constituted the site of exchange. "Speculative epistemology," Baucom asserts, "is that procedure by which value detaches itself from the life of things and rearticulates itself in the novelistic theatre of the typicalizing imagination" (106). It thus becomes possible to seek immunity for an abstract, imagined, future life, against a life that already exists—and it is this possibility that underwrites the legitimization of financialized disposability, as Baucom recounts in the central incident of his book, wherein a group of slaves were summarily thrown overboard in 1781 for the insurance, partly in order to ensure a future of continued trade in slaves. The

desperate need that I have already mentioned of those engaged in neoliberal enterprise to continually generate new consumables (out of thin air, in the case of financial speculation), becomes the source of one's immunity against becoming a member of the population that the neoliberal apparatus renders both inherently and incidentally disposable in the first place. Again, it seems, the farm teaches us to become zombies: financial zombies, this time, charged with shoring up as much as possible our immunity against too much contamination by, or responsibility for, the disposable zombie animals, human and otherwise, and against thinking too much about this apparatus of immunity and its degree of legitimacy.

Shukin has already begun to theorize the biopolitical desire for obtaining both a conceptual and literal immunity from animals, situating this desire in our biopolitical effort to preserve human life. Tracing the cultural rhetoric of animal-sourced pandemics, Shukin observes that a general "fear for 'human species survival' itself" operates to "justify growing intolerance toward dangerously entwined ethnic-animal populations" (207). This paradox reiterates the confluence I want to trace between biopolitical immunity and the financial logic of insurance: ensuring the abstract future ideal economic system necessitates a protective limiting of relations with others in the present. Here, we can begin to understand how speculative neoliberal logic might both reinforce and be girded by a more general biopolitical orientation to animal life on the farm. Neoliberal speculation, a species of immunitary logic that is devastatingly powerful in its own right,

dovetails comprehensively on the farm with a broader, "older," more profound speciesist immunization—the kind that manifests in sacrifice, for example—which seeks to shield the human population from an excessive implication in, or responsibility for, the animal population. Fittingly, both logics operate speculatively, doubling the displacement of connection between human and animal: first, at the primary conceptual level in their very project to separate the human and animal; and second, through the conceptual means by which this "separation" is achieved, which involves prioritizing the health of the overall speculative, abstract, ideal enterprise above that of any currently-involved being or group. In financialized terms, the animals are situated on the other side of an immunitary imperative that treats them as merely speculative pieces of either asset or liability; likewise, in the terms of the broader speciesist immunitary paradigm, the animals find themselves on the other side of a conceptual fence meant to shield human life and politics from an excessive contamination by animal life, in both its recognized/recognizable and unimagined/unimaginable forms. On the factory farm, in other words, insurance and traditional humanist immunity are mutually legitimizing forms of speculative security that dually prevent us from becoming excessively implicated in the collective, and that therefore also attempt to situate us—the immune, the insured—above the potentially disposable, collective vagaries of teeming, unpredictable life. Just as in the next chapter a certain interpretation of symbiosis will situate humanity in an immunized position above predation, here, the conceptual double helix of insurance and "species

immunity" assures us that it may be possible to attain a position above the inherently precarious life of animals—to whatever limited extent possible under the perilous terms of neoliberal biopolitics.

In order to develop this idea, I will now turn to specific instances from the factory farm. First, I will take up the standard, widespread use of antibiotics in animal feed on American farms. The *New York Times* has reported that an estimated eighty-four percent of all antibiotics produced are used in agriculture, and that the Food and Drug Administration is sufficiently concerned about the ubiquity of antibiotics in farming that the agency has begun pushing the food industry to limit use (Harris). Antibiotics are used in general animal feed on intensive farming operations in order to promote physical growth; to pre-emptively prevent the illnesses that are more common in conditions of close, stressful confinement; and, of course, to treat sick animals. As Michael Pollan notes, however, the distinction between these reasons for giving antibiotics to cattle, for instance, is inherently muddied by the fact that "the animals probably wouldn't be sick if not for the diet of grain we feed them" (79)—instead of the various grasses that form their natural diet—which sickens cattle and compromises their immune systems, yet can also promote physical growth given the proper pharmaceutical support.

Officially, the primary immunitary paradigm at work here is biological and wholly animal-focused, having very little to do with us. In other words, supposedly we are merely biopolitically—and magnanimously, altruistically—

aiding one animal population (valuable food animals) to gain a stronger immunity against another animal population (disposable pathogens), as well as bolstering each individual food animal's ability to fight off infection, or to limit its deleterious enmeshment with others. Yet what does this official account teach us about life, other than that we are of an admirably helpful sort of species? I suggest that this narrative opens a limited window of cross-species identification: like us, the animals are a population in need of protection. Consistent with the neoliberal frames of life I have been tracing, however, the window remains constitutively limited in that here we are effectively only asked to identify with other animals as fellow zombies: out of sheer necessity in a dog-eat-dog neoliberal world, other animals are revealed to rely upon artificial mechanisms of immunity in order merely to survive, just as we do. At the same time, the spectre of their potential illness reiteratively reminds us that we need to remain vigilant over both our own biological immunity against them, and the continued maintenance of our source of financial immunity against potential losses incurred by sick animals: the administration of mass antibiotics.

Indeed, alongside the need for intensified biological immunity to farm animals that is figured by this vision through a zombie mirror, darkly, the factory farm's use of mass antibiotics also inherently models a pedagogical dissuasion from further critical interrogation of the problem of animal illness. In this respect, mass antibiotics are perhaps the *pharmakon* of too much thought: their use, and the spectre of animal illness they represent, carry the potential to disruptively

haunt our immunizing insistence that we bear no ethical responsibility for the animal population; however, this haunting is immediately quelled by the fact that, officially at least, the administration of mass antibiotics is a pre-emptive panacea. There is no need, the farming apparatus performatively claims, to think through a problem that no longer exists. Consequently, for instance, the critical apprehension that perhaps these animals' reliance upon artificial immunity for survival mirrors our own due to their physical confinement in a deeply neoliberally designed space of our making, is efficiently foreclosed. Likewise, mass antibiotics model a world in which there is no need to question the presumption that mass animal illness is inevitable, no need to engage the possibility that perhaps the factory farm perpetuates a violent misfit at the site of interface between human and animal modes of life: that we may actually be housing, on the farm, a continual confrontation between human life and forms of animal life that we cannot necessarily contain or anticipate.

In other words, unlike a situation in which we might suppose that the presence of a sick animal—or many sick animals—would prompt a critical interrogation of material farm conditions, on the financialized farm, farming policies and the conditions they create invoke the fragile, yet rhetorically considerable speculative immunity found in abstract financial imperatives. Consequently, the larger financial apparatus of the factory farm—and by extension, all of us who profit from or consume factory farm products—learn to see ourselves as conceptually and materially immune from the ethical or political

implications of mass animal illness. Instead, an abstract financial problem (the "sick animal") that results from abstract finance-based farming practices (close confinement, cheap feed) is deemed to have an abstract financial solution (antibiotics as a pre-emptive insurance policy). By means of enabling the farming apparatus to maintain its abstract, speculative level of logic, the insurance policy of mass antibiotics works to insure not only the health of the animal population on the farm, but just as importantly for the continuation of the enterprise, also insures the conceptual legitimacy of our subjection of these animals to the conditions on the factory farm.

Initially, then, mass antibiotics offer a conceptual salve for the wound opened by animal illness: our way of conducting ourselves politically in the world is sound, the antibiotics solution assures us, and productive of healthy populations of both humans and animals. However, I have used the word "initially" because, as is becoming increasingly obvious in public health circles, the mass use of antibiotics in animal feed may ultimately be dangerous to human health. As I have mentioned, the F.D.A. has called for more restraint in the administration of antibiotics to farm animals due to rising concerns that the overuse of antibiotics is directly responsible for the dramatic increase of antibiotic-resistant infections in the human community. Derrida's oft-cited emphasis upon the potential for immunizing projects to become autoimmunitary is useful here: "the perverse effect of the autoimmunitary" becomes clear, Derrida argues, when "repression in both its psychoanalytical sense and its political sense—whether it be through the

police, the military, or the economy—ends up producing, reproducing, and regenerating the very thing it seeks to disarm" (Derrida and Borradori 99). In the case of mass antibiotics, the operation of autoimmunity is clear: the "literal" or biological process works hand in hand with a conceptual one. Our initial move to immunize ourselves from the profoundly threatening prospect of having life in common with the animal—not necessarily a common life, but the prospect of both "us" and "them" possessing a politically significant life—consists in conceptually shielding ourselves from the possibility of that commonality. In particular, we employ mass antibiotics against the animal population in a way that attempts to standardize the animals' position as both mere, undifferentiated biological collective under our control, and as an ideal financial category upon which we may inflict any speculative instrument called for by the abstract economy that overrides and occludes the interests of the lives it contains. In other words, like the captive bolt stunner that opens this chapter, the mass administration of antibiotics figures forth our effort to clean our hands of a potentially messy engagement with animal life. As the autoimmunizing effects of mass antibiotics use make clear, however, we cannot have done with animal life: the more we claim that we wholly know and have wholly dealt with all animal life appropriately and on our terms, the more the fact of the animal's politically relevant engagements with us—both recognizable and unforeseen, unknowable—will ingratiate themselves in our community. The more we make the biopolitical claim that animal life can be brought into line with the objectives and desires of

neoliberal biopolitics, the more often animal ways of life show us that they exceed those objectives and desires.

At this point I will briefly turn to two more examples of speculative practice on the factory farm that only affirm, in my view, the factory farm as a locus of our attempt to immunize humanity from animality: the recent Canadian hog cull, and the emergence of the "downer" category. The Canadian hog cull of 2008 represents a particularly bald case of financial speculation's entrance into animal agriculture. In an attempt to address a purely financial problem—"an ugly confluence of record high feed prices, a higher dollar making exports less attractive, and food labelling initiatives south of the border that will make Canadian meat less attractive for processors" (Chung)—the Canadian government and the Canadian Pork Council offered monetary compensation to pork producers in exchange for culling about ten percent of Canada's breeding sows. In order not to interfere with trade regulations, the program originally stipulated that the culled meat either be diverted for rendering or simply disposed of. Again, from a financial perspective, the imagined, abstract future value of the hog trade is here deemed to be higher than the current value of the commodities at hand, which are thus framed as being wholly disposable. Consequently, the cull serves as insurance for the overall, future-oriented enterprise.

In particular, I will address two immunitary consequences of the factory farming system that such a cull brings to light. First, the cull makes clear that the unprecedented demographic scale of factory farming *requires* an intensification of

the conceptual immunitary apparatus of legitimized disposability, on the part of the producers. Whereas a market downturn or unexpected surplus of domestic animals on a traditional farm would have posed a problem of redistribution and/or a lower return on investment in particular animals, on the factory farm such occurrences are tantamount to both financial and biopolitical disaster. Without abstractly conceived mechanisms like the cull—with recourse to the quick and dirty dispatches of sovereign killing to carry out that abstract solution—the excess of life and lives on the farm would very quickly become completely unmanageable and uncontainable: a scene of zombie chaos. Here, an abstract financial instrument conveniently serves as a protective mechanism for the human population, against an animal population so artificially large and unwieldy that only the tightest biopolitical controls enable our self-inoculating ability to keep the factory farm population at any safe degree of physical and conceptual remove, let alone maintaining our capacity to yield any profit from the scene.

The second immunitary feature of the cull I will focus on, however, introduces another complication to the picture I am sketching of the factory farm's pedagogical idealization of an engagement with animal life that is carefully limited to neoliberal biopolitical terms. Significantly, the exemption of the culled meat from the human food chain raised the ire not only of food banks and of ordinary citizens, but also of farmers, who as Andrew Chung reported in the *Toronto Star*, "had hoped their life's work, raising pigs, would go to feed people." Eventually, the controversy led to the diversion of much of the culled meat to

food banks. What should we make of the fact that so many people were troubled by the stipulation that the culled animals' bodies be kept out of the human food chain? What immunitary presuppositions are being disturbed here? There is no question that such a stipulation serves a symbolic immunitary purpose on its own terms; specifically, it aims at a conceptualization of food animals as being abstract commodities subject to normal market mechanisms of surplus disposal, and so forth. Were such a figurative effort fully successful, surely we could successfully immunize ourselves against the spectre of excessive animal life through the simple act of denying its existence, simply classifying such animals as disposable.

Yet as we have seen, the immunitary process in this case was hardly so smooth: many people found such a characterization of the culled animals to be truly troubling. What accounts for this discomfort, to use decidedly affective terms? There are two compelling readings of the situation, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. First, the cull calls overt public attention to the zombie pedagogy of the factory farm, and its central assertion that all life is reducible to zombie life. While it will become clear throughout this thesis the considerable extent to which this lesson has infiltrated public discourse concerning our conceptual framework of life, it is also evident that we still generally desire to view "feeding people" in terms of altruism and mutual care. However, the stark confrontation with the consequences of neoliberal biopolitics occasioned by the cull interrupts any supposition that food production is a straightforward matter of nourishment. Instead, the cull uncomfortably signals not

only that factory farming entails seeing animals as reducible to zombie life, but also that the system requires from *us* a zombie-like drive for productive consumption, to the extent that we have evidently committed ourselves to irrationally producing far more life than we have legitimate (read: biologically nourishing) use for. We are no longer "feeding people," the cull suggests, as much as we are feeding the insatiable zombie framework of speculative capitalism.

In my second reading of our discomfort concerning this scenario, however, our anxiety over the cull also stems from the fact that here, competing immune systems are calling each other into question. Specifically, by preventing the culled animals from being eaten as meat, the financial apparatus of immunization is inadvertently thwarting a more traditional immunitary apparatus: sacrifice. I have already mentioned sacrifice, and I turn to the concept more fully in the next two chapters, but for our purposes here it is important to note briefly the symbolically immunitary dimension of meat eating. Derrida theorizes eating meat as being central to human subject formation, because it institutes a conceptual apparatus for the "noncriminal putting to death" of animals, which enables the emergence of a human subject premised upon a carnivorous virility that draws a definitive biopolitical line between human life and that of animals (Derrida and Nancy 278). Read in terms of immunity, the apparatus of sacrifice articulates a logic wherein humanity immunizes itself from excessive implication, entanglement, and identification with animal life by deeming animals killable. Yet in order for this symbolic designation to be seen as legitimate according to the

definition of sacrifice, the sacrificial "killability" of animals needs to serve an end; or what Bauman, quoting the *Oxford English Dictionary*, calls "a higher or more pressing claim" (*Does* 83). In other words, as Derrida argues, the sacrificial "end" of meat eating is to bolster—or immunize—the human, both nutritionally and symbolically. While in the case of stunning, the incidental and deliberate justifications of human-animal violence are able to co-exist rather seamlessly, here, the fact that the "incidental" representation of killing (insurance) directly prevents the "deliberate" function of killing from unfolding (sacrificial meat eating), results in potentially consciousness-raising discord. With the sacrificial element of animal husbandry no longer able to be taken for granted, through the cull the whole discourse of killability is potentially exposed to renewed scrutiny, which we could read as being conceptually autoimmunizing—rendering vulnerable, in other words, even our strongest immunitary apparatuses against the acknowledgment of our inter-implication with animal life. The cull's doubling of the immunitary narratives at work—the financializing and the sacrificial—potentially cancels out our conceptual immunity against animal life. Hence, the compromise: the factory farming apparatus finds a way to leave both immunizing mechanisms intact, by partly designating the animals as meat in the end. At the last minute, we maintain our immunity against too much thought.

The last speculative process I will explore here echoes, in many significant respects, the biopolitical issues at stake in mass antibiotics and the cull. As with those practices, the "downer" category carries the potential to elicit a productive

questioning of what we are doing on the factory farm and to whom—thereby posing a threat to the neoliberal biopolitical frame of consideration, which insists we are dealing solely with disposable zombie life, out of the pure necessity of our own zombie-like imperatives of productive consumption. "Downer" refers to an animal on the farm or in the abattoir that is too sick to stand, due to neglect and the unhealthy conditions on factory farms. Erik Marcus notes that the "only credible estimate" he could find posits the annual number of downer cattle in America to be 195,000, or around one percent of American cattle slaughtered annually (56). While the outcomes of rescues by animal rights organizations and the testimony of veterinarians has consistently shown that many downer animals could be revived with the most basic care, on the factory farm it has often become acceptable practice to simply dispose of such animals—literally "letting die" the animals who are not sufficiently responsive to the standardized, systemic effort to "make live" the general factory farm population. Right away we can discern in this phenomenon the pervasive extent of the hegemonic recourse to the individualized form of immunity championed by neoliberal discourse: the factory farm is less an interspecies community wherein one member's inability to stand would occasion some kind of care response from those (human) members with the relevant resources to help, than it is an aggregate collection of individuals, each of whom bear the final responsibility for his or her own physical immunity to the surroundings. Quite simply, in the "dog-eat-dog" context of factory farm pedagogy, beings that are kept alive solely to consume need to be capable of

staying alive on the merits of their individual "guts and stamina" alone, to echo Bauman's words. The convenient shift here, between the structural emphasis on abstract population-level policy calculation that is undoubtedly the overriding logic of the farm, to a pedagogical focus on individual immunity when things go wrong at the systemic level—so widely relied upon in *human*-centred neoliberal biopolitics—apparently carries over seamlessly into an interspecies context, confirming that the classic liberal notion of the "social contract" is hardly operational at the heart of neoliberal capitalism. The depths of imposed disposability at work here are illustrated by the fact that even taking the trouble to euthanize downer animals, which in many cases would be less expensive than providing basic medical care, has not become standard treatment for downer animals. As Jonathan Safran Foer reports in his 2009 book *Eating Animals*, "[i]n most of America's fifty states it is perfectly legal (and perfectly common) to simply let downers die of exposure over days or toss them, live, into dumpsters" (56). Because since 2004 it has been illegal to slaughter downer animals for human consumption (Marcus 12)—an outcome of the mad cow scare[12]—downer animals have been rendered as fully disposable from the perspective of the system, without even the modicum of financial or sacrificial value they may have once had.

[12] The mad cow scare represents, perhaps, another autoimmune crisis for interspecies biopolitics, wherein the abstract, financialized decision to feed herbivorous cattle the ground-up remains of sick cows in order to render a waste product into a cheap input resulted in a crisis that was damaging to the enterprise in terms of reputation, finance, and overall population health.

Unlike mass antibiotics and financialized culls, downers are only figurable as speculative insurance in a rather indirect fashion: by accepting downers as part of the system, the financial enterprise is able to carry on the operation of the factory farm without interruption, thus deeming that very acceptability as a form of insurance. Moreover, we could argue that continued industry resistance to addressing the problem of downers also situates the issue as insurance, in that as Marcus suggests, "[p]erhaps industry fears a slippery slope—that by implementing inexpensive reforms they will hasten the day when the public will demand comprehensive improvements in farmed animal welfare" (54). In other words, deeming the presence of downers as acceptable preserves the speculative economy of value on the factory farm: again, the only value that counts in the calculus of responsibility is financial value, and the health of the overall enterprise supersedes a consideration of the health of individuals.

Industry's treatment of downers is legible, then, as an attempt to immunize human beings once again from a reconsideration of our ties to, and responsibility for, animal life. In this case, it is already clear that we have immunized ourselves by deeming the animals in question as being fundamentally disposable. Because such animals do not function properly in the speculative economy, they are simply excluded from its purview and often-meagre protections. Within this general immunization-by-disposability, however, there are particular immunizing implications of the regularized unwillingness to implement policies of medical treatment or euthanasia for downed animals. Such reticence to engage with the

downed animal even to the extent of euthanizing it or giving it water and rest signals not only an orientation of presumed disposability—though it certainly signals this, as I have suggested—but also helps pedagogically render a biopolitical picture of factory-farmed animals as possessing no immunity to their environment, which works to our immunitary benefit beyond the mere legitimized ability to leave the animal to its own devices, as I outlined above. Left utterly to languish, the untreated/uneuthanized downer animal seems to articulate both a total passivity in relation to its conditions, and a thorough inability to command even the most perfunctory political or ethical interaction from us. Significantly, then, the languishing downed animal is representationally framed by the factory farm as being *essentially* beholden or captive to its surroundings in a way that thus doubly works to deny them standing within even the limited zombie frame of life offered by neoliberal biopolitics. I will return to the conceptual stakes of presuming that animals are immersed in their surroundings in the next chapter with reference to Temple Grandin and Martin Heidegger, neither of whom argues that such immersion provides a license for utterly disposing of the animal. For now, however, it is sufficient to remark that this perceived quality of downer animals seems to imply that, in this context, such animals are thereby figurable as mere "surroundings" for the ongoing project of survival, constitutively unworthy of the most basic consideration or reconsideration.

Yet, hearkening back to my discussion of animal illness in the context of mass antibiotics, animal illness in downers is ripe for being read in terms of the

spectral potential of animal forms of life that fall outside the prescribed frame. On this reading, their perceived lack of immunity does not necessarily relegate them to a realm outside of intelligible life, but perhaps calls into question the assumed co-extensiveness of political engagement and immunization altogether. At any rate, here I simply wish to register that even in the case of downer animals, a reconsideration of the possibilities of animal life is never definitively foreclosed, despite even the most obsessive attempts to promote a perspective on animal life defined by the speculative apparatus of neoliberal biopolitics.

These multiple possibilities suggest, too, some overall conclusions about the critical usefulness of the immunization paradigm for understanding our speculative forms of biopower on the farm. On one hand, each of the factory farming practices I have discussed here seems to articulate quite clearly that the model of immunization aptly describes our biopolitical pedagogy about food animals. Specifically, it appears that there are few critical snags in the effort to read our population-level policies on food animals in terms of immunity—terms which allow us to productively read as mutually reinforcing our ontological effort to maintain a single species line between what Derrida calls "Man with a capital M and Animal with a capital A" (*Animal* 29), and our financial effort to securely capitalize upon the "vast encampment" of zombie animals that this very distinction creates and sets up to be financially speculated upon. On the other hand, all of our immunizing efforts are more or less anxious, with far from guaranteed success. Both the prescribed frame through which we are supposed to

see animals and the imperative not to engage in further critical reflection beyond the given frame are put under pressure by the fact that food animals are fundamentally unpredictable: they run the gamut from serving as the abjected vehicle of our inoculation to inducing our very autoimmunization. When the animal population does not perform or is not containable according to our biopolitical expectations, for instance, what we experience as the autoimmunizing effects of our speculative overdetermination *are* such, but are not necessarily reducible to that relation; in addition to that relation, they might be enacting unknown forms of life and collective interaction that are utterly heterogenous to the register of immunity.

Creating the Best Shelf Life Possible: Optimizing the Commodity

In the foregoing section, I focused on factory farming practices that are borne of speculative biopolitical calculations made at the level of the population; here I turn to a complementary form of biopower that calculates efficiency at a bodily level. To be sure, mass antibiotics, culls, and the downer population are products of decisions about bodies; likewise, the practices I will examine here are certainly "speculative" in that they project a certain financial norm that overrides the interests of both individuals and certain groups (male layer chicks, for example). The distinction between these types of practice is, then, a rather fine one: while the practices I examined in the last section calculate productivity and efficiency outputs using the forecasted overall population as a bottom line, the

practices I will explore here—clipping and docking beaks and tails, "forced molting" along with other enhancements of reproductive productivity, and disposing of male layer chicks at birth—attempt to optimize productivity and efficiency by eliminating as much excess of animal life as possible *in advance* of the population-based calculation. In other words, the former practices operate more or less to biopolitically position the farm animal population as an abstract, single unit; while the practices I will examine here work "behind the scenes," helping smooth the way for such overall abstractification by trimming away—rendering disposable—aspects of animal life that are not assimilable to the imperatives of the financial and biopolitical apparatus. The result, again, is the factory farm's articulation of a message about human and animal life that emphasizes the legitimacy of reducing life to the zombie functions of productive consumption.

In *Animal Capital*, Shukin traces the historical contingency of animal "waste," arguing that the logic of Taylorist industrial efficiency in the early 1900s "*produced* wasteful movement as a matter of reform and as a negative surplus that could be shaved off and converted into savings for the capitalist" (73). In her analysis of animal rendering as a literal and representational effort to figure forth a "closed loop" of totalized animal capital, Shukin suggests that the historical production of "waste" and its recuperation in rendering "can be placed in the broader context, then, of a complex of scrutinizing, disassembling, and sorting practices biopolitically registering nature and labor as ever more minute units of

potential value" (74). While Shukin directs this critique toward an analysis of the rendering industry, I think it is equally applicable to factory farming practices that strive to eliminate the material existence of waste in a pre-emptive, rather than recuperative, fashion. Specifically, the designation and "pro-active" removal of various kinds of waste from the individual animal's life provides a key mechanism of the zombification I have been tracing throughout this chapter: through this kind of biopolitical operation on the animal's body, we receive a visceral impression of a being that lives only to consume; in other words, the animal is *seen* to have become zombie life. Surely, this spectacular education also goes some distance to affirm the legitimacy of our zombie-like imperative to produce animal life at an obsessive pace; after all, our sheer ability to manipulate animal life in ways that enable the acceleration and concentration of production contains its own spectacular ratification of the neoliberal biopolitical frame of life. Ultimately, such anticipatory practices still attempt to enact a "closed loop" of animal capital, yet not through rendering or recycling the "waste" of the process, but rather by precluding and/or externalizing altogether from calculation any aspect of the living animal's body or existence that does not serve capital's ends.[13] Waste rendering and preventive "waste-shaving," therefore, share the goal of closed-loop animal capital, but (ostensibly) achieve that fantasy through slightly different means: the former by means of articulating a totalized "industrial

[13] I think my distinction stands regardless of whether the material products of the waste elimination I will trace here are, in fact, rendered (pig tails, beaks, male layer chicks). They very well may be rendered, although I have not seen much evidence of this. The distinction I am trying to make has less to do with whether waste is physically rendered, and more to do with the figurative means of legitimation in the two types of cases.

ecology" (Shukin 67),[14] and the latter by means of producing a supposedly "wasteless" commodity in the first place, utterly appropriable to a neoliberal biopolitical operation and education.

My first example of this kind of waste exclusion involves the literal trimming of living animals on the farm: it has become standard intensive farming practice to "dock" or cut off the tails of all pigs and partially sear off the beaks of all chickens. I invoke these practices together not only because they both consist of the literal cutting off of an animal part deemed to be unnecessary waste, but also because the designation of these particular parts as intolerable waste has to do with the animal's undeniably *social* response to factory farming conditions. Hog tails are cut off in order to pre-empt the tail biting of other hogs, which is a form of aggression widely attributed to the stress and boredom of close confinement, and perhaps early weaning (Singer, *Animal* 121-22, Pollan 218, Scully 24). Likewise, the beaks of chickens are seared off in order to prevent the excessive pecking of other chickens that is also routinely attributed to stress, and to the interruption of chickens' usual "pecking" hierarchies that are observable in non-factory-farmed chicken populations (Singer 99-101, Marcus 17). Significantly, then, while we may wish to interpret docking and searing as mere modifications of biological life, they also figure an attempt to biopolitically attenuate animal relations, in that they are responses to an interspecies clash between the human biopolitical regime and animal forms of *intra*species interaction. Yet because with

[14] See Shukin: "a capitalist economy began to approach the totality of a natural ecosystem through the material mimicry of Nature promised by industrial rendering" (71).

docking and searing we violently eliminate an instrument of animal communication, it becomes crucial to interpret these practices as not merely an interaction with animal life, but also as an active repudiation of it—an attempt to annihilate, or at least wholly disavow the influence of, any expression of animal life that might gesture beyond its depiction as being wholly defined by a mindless, asocial drive to consume. Significantly, too, once the perceived "excesses" of animal interaction are removed, the financial appropriation of animal life to the imperatives of capital is representable as being virtually seamless—thereby pre-emptively immunizing us, yet again, from the need to consider any other possible definitions of animal life.

Moreover, docking and searing do not only narrow the field of possible readings of animal life; these practices also maximize and optimize the one positive definition of animal life that is emphasized in neoliberal biopolitics: its potentially lucrative (for us) capacity to consume. Docking hogs' tails reduces the rates of fighting and biting, which are costly to the enterprise because they reduce lucrative weight gain in hogs (Singer 121): in the absence of this practice, in other words, the hog stops consuming, and thus loses even the slim margin of zombie value it possesses. Similarly, beak searing prevents an expensive loss of life and meat weight in chickens, and the financial value of both hogs and chickens on the farm is also maximized due to the increased population density that docking and searing allow (Singer 121, Marcus 17). In other words, the elimination of "wasteful" aspects of the animal not only forecloses the most overt and

recognizable expressions of forms of animal community that are extraneous to the order of consumption, but also acts to concentrate the aspects of animal life that serve the ends of capital,[15] thus doubly working to ontologically legitimate our treatment of animals as zombie life.

A similar process attends the biopolitical involvement with reproductive life on the factory farm. Egg-laying hens are routinely subjected to "forced molting," which uses a combination of manipulated lighting and food deprivation to "trick" the chicken's body into producing more eggs (Foer 60). Dairy cows, in a similarly standardized factory-farming practice, are impregnated and re-impregnated on a schedule that requires the early weaning of their calves, in order to maximize milk production (Marcus 35). As for hogs, although this particular practice is slowly falling out of favour in America due to various pieces of legislation and the growth of public awareness, breeding sows are often kept in "gestation crates," or pens too small to allow the pregnant and nursing sows to turn around (Foer 170). Finally, every factory-farmed species reproduces solely by means of artificial insemination, which enables the human regulation of both gestation timing and the genetic profile of every animal born on an intensive farm (Bixby 170). All of these examples of biopolitical intervention in reproduction speak to the zombification of animal life of the farm. In the context of reproduction, we do not only produce beings that live only to consume, but beings

[15] Another example of this biological concentration of value is found in the breeding of chickens to have such large breast muscles that by slaughter they can no longer walk properly (Foer 130). This practice, too, seems to be striving to minimize the "excessive" or financially unnecessary aspects of animal life—in this case, walking and standing—in a way that doubly disavows animal politics.

that are also locked into a second-order zombie cycle of productive consumption, just as we are: we allow these animals to survive only by virtue of their forced ability to produce more life at ever-increasing rates. With our biopolitical intervention in reproduction, then, in a sense we arrive at the figurative heart of zombie pedagogy on the factory farm. Significantly, in many of these cases we can discern a "shaving off" of animal excess that is perhaps more temporal than physical: for both hens and cows, there is an enforced acceleration in successive reproductive cycles; and for sows, the temporal optimization is grounded in the total coincidence of the time of life (during pregnancy and nursing) and physical confinement. In each of these cases, the time that female animals are forced to spend on financially lucrative activities—namely growing, in the space of their bodies, what Carol J. Adams calls "feminized protein" (90-91)—is maximized to the fullest extent possible, while time spent other ways—caring for calves, for instance, or simply not reproducing—is minimized. As with docking and searing, this temporal optimization of the lives of reproductive females underwrites a preclusion of the opportunity to apprehend the complexity of animal life from at least two directions. On one hand, the opportunity for these animals to indulge in behaviours we might recognize as forming a more complex rendering of animal life than that articulated by zombie pedagogy is temporally foreclosed—behaviours and activities ranging from the simple act of sleeping at certain times, to interacting with each other and with offspring, are simply pre-empted, and thus rendered invisible. On the other hand, complementing this absence of other

elements of animal life is the overwhelming *presence* of the activity that neoliberal biopolitics pedagogically emphasizes is the sole property of animal life: productive consumption.

The final example of the phenomenon of extreme optimization is, like the second example in the last section, a form of cull, and thus illustrates the persistent thread of a sovereign mechanism of death dealing within biopolitics. I refer here to the standard practice on egg-producing factory farms of killing all male "layer" chicks at birth. This practice is financially legitimated by the fact that layer chickens are not bred to be profitable as meat chickens, and by the obvious fact that male layers cannot lay eggs (Foer 48). The male layer chick's entire body is thus "shaved off": here is a body that cannot profitably consume to the ends of either producing profitable muscles or reproducing in the form of profitable eggs. Hence, even its zombie life is deemed constitutively unviable.

While those of us not working in the factory farm industry may think that any protein-bearing, healthy food animal on the factory farm must carry inherent financial value, clearly the truth is more complex. Combining the speculative population-based calculation that I theorized in the last section and the imperative to concentrate value in the ways I am addressing here results in a vastly intensified expansion of what elements of life may be deemed disposable on the factory farm. In *Wasted Lives*, Bauman characterizes this contemporary form of disposability as resulting from the fact that "[m]odernity is a condition of compulsive, and addictive, designing. Where is design, there is waste…when it

comes to designing the forms of human togetherness, the waste is human beings" (30). Although Bauman's frame is clearly human-oriented here, the biopolitical orientation it describes is eminently applicable to the factory farm: the imperative to concentrate animal value is a key tenet of the financialized re-designing of the human-animal relationship, and so the *production* of new kinds of waste is the intrinsic effect of the intensified effort to *eliminate* waste. In other words, the supposedly "efficient" protocol to concentrate value on the factory farm ironically produces copious amounts of waste—waste that should be externalized from even financial consideration as expediently as possible, since we are reminded that as David Harvey notes, the neoliberal regime operates according to the dictum "privatize profits and socialize risks" (*Enigma* 10).[16] Under this normative regime, value is radically narrowed, condensed, and framed as being obtainable only from top producers, or the most optimized and maximized specimens. Moreover, waste is also redefined: no longer presumed to consist only of ill animals, or inedible elements of animal life, the threshold for being deemed "waste" on the farm is lowered in neoliberal designs, coming to rest, for now, at the level of the merely *less* productive specimen, rather than utterly unproductive or inedible elements. To be technically made of meat is no longer enough to ensure one's financial value, nor is having a merely slowed-down egg cycle, or lowered milk capacity. I invoke this fact not in order to argue that being made of

[16] Killing all male layer chicks at birth is just one example of this paradoxical phenomenon on the factory farm: other examples are becoming well known, too, such as the massive manure "lagoons" that are too noxious to use as fertilizer, and the massive meat recalls that have become commonplace in the wake of "efficiently" speeding up the killfloor line.

protein *should* be the arbiter of value, but in order to emphasize that the pedagogy of neoliberal biopolitics does not solely concern itself with asserting that animals are commodities. In other words, the obsessive optimization I am tracing here, which has intensified to the extent that it now produces what can only be described as irrational and inefficient levels of waste, is a prime indication that we are no longer just being taught how to identify commodifiable life. Rather, the factory farm is teaching us that there is no alternative to our own obsessive production of consumable life—a production that must continue even in the absence of an ability to profitably consume all that we produce. In short, we are being taught that there is no alternative to zombie life.

The fact that all of the biopolitical optimizations I have explored here require continual maintenance and vigilance on the part of farm operators indicates that, as with all of our attempted immunizations against non-prescribed readings and expressions of animal life, the articulation of neoliberal biopolitical education is a tenuous and somewhat anxious operation. Insisting upon such a limited frame of consideration is, in other words, the factory farm's full-time job. However, it is crucial to note that the rise of genetic manipulation as a standard instrument of factory farming represents a form of optimization that carries the conceptual potential to validate zombie pedagogy in unprecedented ways. As we strip down an animal's genetic profile to the normatively emphasized element under neoliberal biopolitics—the ability to consume and produce—the unpredictable and uncontainable aspects of animal life, so crucial to any ethical

resistance to factory farm pedagogy, become even more difficult to envision. Consequently, as I explore in the next chapter, as part of our analysis of neoliberal biopolitics it is vital to interrogate the discourse of science, especially how it becomes complicit with the claims of factory farm pedagogy.

Welfare Discourse at the Factory Farm

In the final section of this chapter, I take what may initially seem like a rather sharp turn toward exploring the pedagogical significance of welfare measures at the site of the factory farm. Upon investigation, however, it becomes clear that current welfare discourse as it manifests on the factory farm implicitly tends to complement the pedagogy of animal life I have been tracing in this chapter, rather than functioning the way we might expect it to: as an effort to implement at least some checks and balances at a site so susceptible to the exercise of cruelty. Again, in the key examples of animal welfare discourse I discuss in this section, we are being trained to think of animal life in a radically limited frame of consideration that is amenable to the imperatives of neoliberal biopolitics; and again, we are being positively discouraged from entertaining any critical interrogation that falls outside that prescribed frame. I discuss three examples here: first, I reconsider the practice of stunning animals in terms of its official designation as a welfare measure. My focus on legal regulation continues in the examination of California's forthcoming Prevention of Farm Animal

Cruelty Act,[17] the outcome of the successful passing of Proposition 2, a widely publicized 2008 proposal that sought a limited ban on close animal confinement. Finally, I will discuss a pedagogical staple of the animal rights movement: undercover anti-cruelty videos, documenting animal abuse at factory farms and abattoirs. While it may seem that the final example is fundamentally different from the others in its focus on pedagogy about animal life that is not directly articulated by the factory farm itself, I contend that these videos not only reveal structural dynamics of the factory farm that I have not yet addressed in this chapter—specifically, the racialization and privatization of cruelty—but also illustrate that the limited pedagogy of human and animal life modeled by the factory farm has permeated the broader culture in significant ways. The arguments I make in this section anticipate and lay substantial groundwork for my analysis, in the following chapter, of factory farm architect Temple Grandin's limited and conservative framework for interpreting animal life: as in the examples I examine here, while Grandin's welfare reforms represent a material improvement in our treatment of factory-farmed animals, the rhetorics and logics upon which those reforms are premised at least partly tends to re-inscribe the biopolitical status quo I have been tracing in this chapter, illustrating the firm grasp of neoliberal biopolitics upon our ethical and critical imaginations.

I have already argued that the practice of stunning animals on the factory abattoir before killing them models certain conclusions about killing animals;

[17] This law comes into legal effect on January 1, 2015 ("Proposition 2").

specifically, that they are an inherently killable population of zombie life, and that our zombie-like mode of staying alive under neoliberal biopolitics renders them incidentally killable. Here, I assess the practice in terms of its implications for the pedagogy of animal welfare articulated at the site of the factory farm. Legally enforced in the United States by the Humane Methods of Livestock Slaughter Act, the statute on stunning requires that "all animals are rendered insensible to pain by a single blow or gunshot or an electrical, chemical or other means that is rapid and effective, before being shackled, hoisted, thrown, cast, or cut" (Humane).[18] "Humaneness" is thus equated with the removal of pain at the time of death. By limiting our notion of what it means to be humane to the process of temporally shortening the infliction of pain, stunning reinforces a perception of animal life that is highly amenable to the overall imperatives of the factory farm operation. Specifically, this definition of welfare—and especially our acceptance that it sufficiently encompasses what it means to be "humane" at the site of death—asserts the relevance of only a few characteristics of animal life for our overall consideration. We are only called upon to consider animal life in terms of its possession of sentience, or the ability to feel physical pain; moreover, we are to frame our apprehension of this pain in an utterly atomized temporal framework of conscious experience. In other words, the picture of animal life that emerges from framing stunning as a welfare measure is one that assumes that animals

[18] Significantly, birds raised for poultry are not mentioned directly, and the USDA's Government and Professional Resources on the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act state explicitly that the statute "does not apply to chickens or other birds." Chickens "represent over 95 percent of animals slaughtered for food in the United States" (Tomaselli and Niles 318).

experience being alive solely on a moment-to-moment basis, and in a mode that is tied neatly, finally, to the most basic biological functions and reactions. Such an interpretive framework for animal life is undeniably convenient for the ongoing articulation of a zombie biopolitics.

Moreover, the legislation on stunning not only works in concert with a limited neoliberal biopolitical rendering of animal life, but also exists in a legal context that implicitly tends to figure forth that this rendering covers all the necessary bases of humaneness, thereby precluding the need for any further interrogation. Animal advocacy work routinely identifies the relative paucity of animal welfare legislation in North America[19]—a lack that undoubtedly falls in line with both a long history of structural speciesism, and the shifting neoliberal emphasis in state politics away from any regulation of enterprise. For instance, in their survey of American animal welfare-related legislation, Paige Tomaselli and Meredith Niles note that with the exception of the Humane Slaughter of Livestock Act and its limited laws relating to stunning, "[r]egulation of farm animal welfare at a federal level is almost nonexistent in the United States" (317), due to the inclusion of comprehensive exemptions for factory farms in the few general animal welfare laws that do exist. They note further that many state-level statutes include "common farming exemptions," which exclude any practice deemed "common," "customary," "established," or "accepted" (318). For my purposes here, the tautological quality of such language is directly demonstrative of the

[19] For more on the general lack of legislation across North America, especially in comparison with Europe, see Karen Pinker's documentary *No Country for Animals*.

normative discouragement of further critical thought that I am trying to trace in factory farm welfare discourse: any practice that already takes place at the farm is legitimate because it already takes place at the factory farm. It would seem fitting that tautology would be the favoured rhetorical mode of neoliberal zombie biopolitics, given that this form of politics links survival solely to the obsessive reproduction of the status quo.

Of course, in giving this broad overview of animal welfare law, I do not wish to underestimate the fact that new laws and propositions are often introduced and passed, which indicates a popular interest in the well-being of animals. After all, to be clear, I am not trying to claim that all North American culture is in the totalized thrall of factory farm pedagogy; I am merely asserting the significance of such pedagogy in the hegemonic field of neoliberal biopolitics while attempting to track what it entails. Along these lines, even grassroots legal efforts undertaken in overt resistance to the status quo operation of the factory farm, while undoubtedly laudable, can prove to be inadvertently complicit in some respects with the pedagogy of animal life articulated by the factory farm. California's Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act, for example, will ban forms of confinement that prevent an animal from "(a) Lying down, standing up, and fully extending his or her limbs; and (b) Turning around freely" ("Proposition 2"). This type of confinement is currently a common part of factory farm operations, and includes pig gestation crates, veal crates, and battery cages for poultry. Significantly—and in a rare departure from our tendency to ascribe the

responsibility for cruelty solely to individuals, as I discuss below—this legislation explicitly labels systemically approved aspects of factory farming as "farm animal cruelty." Yet, without underestimating the considerable gains for animal welfare represented by this law, the definition of animal cruelty set forth in the statute is unquestionably sparing: again, the encompassing claim figured by the title "Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty" rhetorically and legally implies that farm animal cruelty is definitively reducible to the practices that are explicitly outlawed in the statute. While in this case, we are potentially enabled to engage the possibility that animals possess a continuous temporal experience of life—the notion of suffering arising from sustained confinement arguably lends itself to such a perspective—the frame through which we are asked to perceive animal life is still very limited. The statute still places its emphasis almost solely on physical discomfort, and any confinement for the purposes of necessary farming operations, such slaughter and transport, are exempted. In fact, these exemptions form the basis of my argument for how this law primarily discourages further critical reflection on factory-farmed animal life: alongside the rhetorical foreclosure of such considerations in the structure of legal language, the exemption of any practice that is necessary to carry out basic farming functions signals the perceived non-necessity of the forms of confinement outlawed in the statute. Indeed, public discourse concerning Proposition 2 repeatedly emphasized that the proposal aimed at the most egregious and seemingly gratuitous forms of confinement. Consequently, does the ban of those practices serve to immunize the

factory farming apparatus, at least somewhat and for the time being, against a critical disruption of the legitimacy of its overall operation?

The final example of welfare discourse I discuss here involves videos of animal abuse at the hands of factory farm workers, usually documented undercover by members of animal advocacy organizations. Widely circulated online by groups like PETA, such videos usually highlight brutal treatment of farm animals that transcends any treatment of animals the average person would find reasonable, including stomping, kicking, flinging, and forcibly bashing.[20] Although animal advocacy organizations use such videos as part of a pedagogy that resists the factory farm, I want to explore the extent to which that resistant pedagogy ultimately works in tandem with the factory farm's neoliberal biopolitical framing of life, human and animal. Ultimately, the pedagogical implications of these videos complicate Slavoj Žižek's assertion that "[t]herein resides the fundamental systemic violence of capitalism, much more uncanny than any direct pre-capitalist socio-ideological violence: this violence is no longer attributable to concrete individuals and their 'evil' intentions, but is purely 'objective,' systemic, anonymous" (12-13). In the case of the factory farm, the systemic anonymity of cruelty operates at full intensity, yet is systematically displaced onto the actions of "concrete individuals" who are already at the mercy of the system, thereby effacing both the pedagogical framing of life set forth under neoliberal biopolitics, and the imperative not to interrogate that framing.

[20] A host of such videos can be located by conducting an internet search for "farm cruelty video."

In America, after all, shop-level factory farm work is almost entirely carried out by structurally disadvantaged populations: the working poor, racialized groups, illegal immigrants, and other underprivileged segments of the population.[21] The work is some of the most gruelling, physically and emotionally demanding work in the country, not least due to the unprecedented industrial intensification of the production and processing of animal lives and deaths. While these systemic features of factory farm work intrinsically demand a much higher than normal level of personal detachment—conceptual immunity from engagement with animal others—on the part of the individual worker, videos of factory farm abuse spectacularly locate responsibility for animal cruelty not with the factory farming system, but with the human subjects that are forced to subsist within the "culture of cruelty," in Giroux's words, that underpins the endemically neoliberal space of the factory farm. Consequently, too, such videos present a zombie tableau that uncritically links disposable humanity with disposable animality: the workers are deemed to be behaving "like animals," thereby going some distance in legitimizing their condition of disposability and visibly reiterating that of the farm animals. Ignored in this figuration, of course, is the fact that the zombie mode of life represented in the videos is not "natural" in the least, but has been framed—wholly produced by the pedagogical and material apparatus of neoliberal biopolitics.

[21] See, for example, Charlie LeDuff's "At a Slaughterhouse, Some Things Never Die."

Conclusion: Neoliberal Biopolitics and Husbandry

Throughout this chapter, I have been asserting that the factory farm offers us a unique education in contemporary biopolitics. The structures and practices that constitute the farm's operation, I have argued, model an understanding of life that emphasizes one imperative at the expense of all others: to see and accept distinctive conceptions of human and animal life as being governed solely by consumption, and by the production of more and more life, with the aim of perpetuating continued consumptive life. However, such a rendering perhaps begs the question: Haven't the processes of food production always entailed such an imperative? What is so different about factory farming and its specific *modus operandi* of neoliberal biopolitics? To return to the comparison with which I opened this chapter, is all animal husbandry—the kind we imagine took place on a nineteenth-century American farm, for instance—readable as an atrocity that we could potentially place on par with the Holocaust?

Undoubtedly, many who might entertain a critical, thoughtful analogy between factory farming and the concentration camp would consider the question I have just posed as being ludicrously irresponsible. However, in order to more fully apprehend the stakes of the field of relations we call biopolitics, and not merely delineate that field along the lines of what we can agree are its most heinous abuses, I think the broader question about the justice of husbandry is worth asking. Derrida observes of the structural differences between factory farming and the Holocaust:

> As if, for example, instead of throwing a people into ovens and gas chambers (let's say Nazi) doctors and geneticists had decided to organize the overproduction and overgeneration of Jews, gypsies, and homosexuals by means of artificial insemination, so that, being continually more numerous and better fed, they could be destined in always increasing numbers for the same hell…. (*Animal* 26)

The factory farm is biopolitical, then, in a way that the Holocaust is not: the mass killing that takes place on the farm is continually enabled by a concerted biopolitical project to "make live" the same population that will later be killed. Yet what Derrida cites as the key structural difference between the hell of the Shoah and the hell of factory farming—that the factory farm's version of exploitation, confinement, and killing is accompanied by the element of continual forced reproduction—is true of all animal husbandry. Does this mean that all animal domestication is "hell"?

I am convinced that the answer to this question is more complex than many interlocutors on both sides of the animal rights debate would allow. The particular "hell" of factory farming that I have been tracing throughout this chapter undoubtedly represents a shift from earlier biopolitical projects of animal husbandry. As Derrida asserts, for one thing, the factory farm represents an unprecedented intensification of the techniques and mechanisms of biopower:

> traditional forms of treatment of the animal have been turned upside down by the joint developments of zoological, ethological, biological, and genetic forms of *knowledge*, which remain inseparable from *techniques* of intervention *into* their object, from the transformation of the actual object, and from the milieu and world of their object, namely, the living animal. (*Animal* 25)

Implicit here, and in much of our casual discourse about traditional farming, is the premise that on the old family farm, animals may have lived and died under the utter biopolitical sway of human biopower, but that the implementation of that power was less intense: the animals were allowed lives of their own, not to mention various kinds of relationships with us and with each other, both defined and otherwise; in general, their lives were not so overdetermined by financial imperatives.

As Shukin has recently reminded us, this less intense brand of biopower is legible in terms of a literal reading of Foucault's remarks on "pastoral power," a form of power that Foucault cites as a precursor for governmentality, and that he primarily uses as a metaphor for explaining a certain iteration of power in the human community. Unlike the neoliberal biopolitics I have been tracing, pastoral power is "a power of care. It looks after the flock, it looks after the individuals of the flock, it sees to it that the sheep do not suffer, it goes in search of those that have strayed off course, and it treats those that are injured" (Foucault, *Security* 127). The stark contrast between this form of power and the form of biopower expressed on the factory farm is clear: as I have argued, the factory farm is a site marked by a wholly indirect care for other lives. Attention is paid to animal life only insofar as that life may be marshalled in fulfilling the tenuous ends of our survival in a neoliberal field of atomized and stripped-down relations. Conversely, pastoral power pedagogically asserts that "[t]he bad shepherd only thinks of good pasture for his own profit, for fattening the flock that he will be able to sell and

scatter, whereas the good shepherd thinks only of his flock and nothing else" (128). In light of the comprehensive instrumentalization of other lives that is rampant on the factory farm, it is relatively easy to agree with Foucault's assertion that "pastoral power is fundamentally a beneficent power" (126). While the traditional family farm is certainly not composed of the exact same power relations as those that hold between the shepherd and his flock, we can recognize that these two sites generally share the same ethic of care and attention to the health and thriving of animals that characterizes the nascent form of biopower that is pastoral power.

Yet it is crucial not to be carried away by the warm beneficence figured by pastoral power's role in traditional animal husbandry. In essence, we are still dealing with a form of discriminatory biopower, if in a somewhat more attentive and nourishing form. After all, as Shukin argues in response to Foucault's general elision of the question of species in the operation of pastoral power, "to assume the species of the individual or population subject to pastoral power is to underestimate just how contingent governmentality may be on the production and ordering of 'species' as a play of similarity and difference" ("Tense" 11). In other words, pastoral power evidently hinges upon the construction of a key difference between the shepherd and the flock, in a manner that we can perhaps read as being structurally similar to the construction of racial difference in Foucault's account of the operating mechanism of biopower.

In fact, to return to my earlier assertion that speciesism is an originary form of the racism Foucault cites as the propeller of biopower, it is clear that traditional animal husbandry relies upon a certain inherent killability that is presumed to inhere in animal life—the same intrinsic killability that I have traced throughout this chapter with regard to the factory farm, based in a designation of essential otherness, followed by an effort to immunize those lives worthy of protection against those that fall on the other side of the dividing line. It is worth noting that in terms of this structural feature of biopower, factory farming might remind us of an nineteenth-century North American farm in more ways than one: the logic of domestication comes in this light to resemble the logic of slavery, which as Achille Mbembe argues, "could be considered one of the first instances of biopolitical experimentation" (21)—far more than it resembles the concentration camp, which Agamben asserts is the *nomos* of modernity. In fact, we can be confident that the model of dehumanization applied to slaves mirrors and dialectically follows upon the animalization of domestic animals: as Charles Patterson notes, "[i]n slave societies, the same practices used to control animals were used to control slaves—castration, branding, whipping, chaining, ear cropping" (14).[22]

I do not intend in the least to collapse the profound differences between pastoral power, the biopolitics of American slavery, and those of factory farming.

[22] For one of innumerable examples of the analogies that were often made between the situations of slaves and farm animals in America, see Frederick Douglass's remark: "I now saw, in my situation, several points of similarity with that of the oxen. They were property, so was I; they were to be broken, so was I. Covey [the slave owner] was to break me, I was to break them; break and be broken—such is life" (94).

Instead, I am attempting to trace the ubiquity, among various forms of biopower, of the construction of a division between lives that matter and those that do not. Accordingly, I posit that even if the two sites of animal husbandry I am comparing here are significantly different in their expressions of power, I do not think it is ultimately possible to exonerate any type of animal husbandry as operating outside a deadly iteration of pervasively unbalanced biopolitics. In other words, it is untenable to idealize traditional sites of animal agriculture—or certainly the factory farm, as Temple Grandin does in the next chapter—as being utterly symbiotic spaces in which we can legitimately deny that the technologies of both biopolitics and sovereignty are structurally available only to the human designers of the site of containment. Ultimately, however, it is clear that the factory farm represents the most intensified site of this kind of abuse of interspecies power in human history, and that consequently its pedagogical framing of both human and animal life urgently compels a rigorous interrogation. In the next two chapters, I turn to investigating the various ways we have taken up factory farm pedagogy as a culture: How do we interpellate such lessons? How might we productively and critically resist this education?

Chapter Two: Framing the Factory Farm with Temple Grandin

"People are often confused by the paradox of my work," writes Temple Grandin in *Thinking in Pictures*, "but to my practical, scientific mind it makes sense to provide a painless death for the cattle I love" (235). In a sense, this assertion summarizes Grandin's lifelong struggle, documented in her best-selling popular science books about her autism and her career as a farm architect and animal welfare consultant, to explain to others and herself how she reconciles her intense identification with farm animals and her role in perpetuating a system that confines and kills billions of them per year. Grandin's explanations for the factory farm would be critically notable on the basis of her growing notoriety alone: her ongoing work with major factory farming corporations to improve the living and slaughter conditions of "food animals" are becoming legendary, as she has single handedly redesigned the equipment and facilities used in one third of America's livestock-handling facilities. Moreover, along with Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Grandin's best-selling books *Animals in Translation*, *Thinking in Pictures*, and most recently *Animals Make Us Human*—not to mention last year's Emmy-winning HBO film *Temple Grandin*—are by far the "animal ethics" works most often cited to me by people that are not involved in critical animal studies. Solely given Grandin's influence in both the farming industry and popular culture, sustained critical engagement with her work and its implications in the field of critical animal studies is past due. Yet I am less interested in studying Grandin's work simply because it is popular, than I am

interested in reading Grandin's popularity as symptomatic of the ways that her work crystallizes and consolidates the complex justifications for intensive farming that we rely upon and circulate in our daily lives.

Indeed, while the last chapter explored the particular pedagogy of life modeled by the operations of the factory farm, here I use Temple Grandin's work as a lens for broadening the pedagogical scope of our cultural orientation to farm animals: which narratives and conceptual apparatuses do we employ "after the fact" to account for the human-animal relationship on the factory farm, when we account for it at all? What do we teach each other about both human and animal life, in and through our efforts to make sense of the farm's performative lessons? To some extent, the narratives we employ rehearse and re-inscribe the zombie pedagogy of life that I explored in the last chapter; yet in many ways, they also articulate imaginary and rhetorical constellations that depart at least somewhat from the power relations that "actually" pervade the factory farm. In other words, while the operation of the farm is largely underwritten by narrow neoliberal biopolitical imperatives that do not explicitly admit alternative conceptions of, say, relationality or ethics, there is still a tendency among many of us to find ways of explaining our farming practices in terms of supposedly non-economic imaginaries, like ecology, comparative epistemology (or "philosophy"), or even spirituality. These departures from the factory farm's pedagogical party line are significant for several reasons. On one hand, their emergence and circulation signal a certain discomfort with the narrow neoliberal frame of consideration

prescribed by the factory farm: we are perhaps not ready, after all, to accept passively and explicitly that all life is simply zombie life. On the other hand, however, to the extent that these alternative narratives are rendered complicit with factory farm pedagogy, they also illustrate how rhetoric may be used to corroborate structural conditions: just as systemic poverty is so often described in the non-systemic rhetorical terms of sin and individual defect, for instance, the factory farm's pedagogy is complemented by rhetorical frameworks that teach parallel lessons of rationalization for the status quo. In this chapter, I want to explore some of these supplementary narratives of factory farming, and examine how and to what extent they echo and reinforce a neoliberal biopolitics, while perhaps appearing to narrate something different. The paradox of Grandin's work, that she is so deeply implicated both affectively and economically[23] in the lives and deaths of farm animals, makes it a site that is particularly productive of the kinds of explanations for the factory farm that I am interested in here.

Grandin's work is also immediately pertinent in the context of factory farm pedagogy in that she overtly positions herself as an educator on the subjects of autistic life and animal life. Her careers as an animal welfare consultant and as a popular author are both premised in her claim that her unique cognitive abilities, rooted in her autism, enable her to grasp lessons about animal life from the animals themselves—lessons which she then, in turn, imparts to factory farm

[23] By the term *economically* I wish both to signal that the source of Grandin's material income lies in the operation of the factory farm, and to suggest that she is "trafficking" in such questions partly as a mode of articulating her own subjectivity, gesturing to a kind of "economy" to which I will return later in the chapter.

managers and her readers. This self-positioning carries complex implications within the posthumanist project of animal studies, which is, as I noted in the introduction to this thesis, dedicated to the re-opening of the very definitions of life that factory farm pedagogy declares closed. As Cary Wolfe notes, in Grandin's marshaling of her own supposed disability in the specific context of trans-species affinity, "disability becomes the *positive*, indeed *enabling*, condition for a powerful experience by Grandin that crosses the lines not only of species difference but also of the organic and inorganic, the biological and mechanical" (*What* 136).[24] Consequently, Wolfe argues, if only in this aspect of Grandin's work, she appears to be laying some important groundwork for "an ethics based not on ability, activity, agency, and empowerment but on a *compassion* that is rooted in our vulnerability and passivity" (141). While not explicitly framed in terms of pedagogy, Wolfe's analysis of Grandin's pedagogical self-positioning helps us to distinguish, going forward, between the potentially posthumanist implications of Grandin's cultural location vis-à-vis humanism's excluded categories of disability and animality, and the often-conservative form and content of her pedagogical claims, including the claim that she possesses unfettered and exclusive access to the "truth" about animal life.

[24] Wolfe makes this remark in the specific context of Grandin's difficulty with body boundaries as a feature of autism, which *enables* her to operate humane slaughter equipment effectively. However, his observation also applies to his analysis of Grandin's intensely visual mode of thinking, and also aptly describes the general pedagogical orientation I am trying to mark, as one that privileges Grandin's affinity with other animals as a source of valuable knowledge about animal life.

In fact, especially if I am to proceed on the premise that Grandin's work illuminates broader cultural narratives about food animals, I should already move to distinguish my analysis of her work from a certain popular assessment of it—which echoes her own appraisal of her work—with regard to how we might understand its marshaling of cultural capital and authority. First, as I will explore more fully below, Grandin often assumes for herself an unmediated relationship with her surroundings; she asserts that she possesses a vast "video library" of information in her head (*Thinking* 5), and can operate like a "tape recorder" (*Thinking* 17). Wolfe cites these comparisons as examples of Grandin's crossing of presumed boundaries for the human: "in Grandin's story, in other words, visuality may be animal, it may be technical, but it is *anything but* 'human'—all the more so, paradoxically enough, for being so 'accurate' and acute" (131). Yet it is also crucial to recognize that Grandin's mechanistic explanations for her brain function, found throughout her work, carry specific implications for how she renders herself as a source of cultural authority: to some extent, a mechanical reflection of culture is still often understood as an "objective" one, and the forceful tone of "brass tacks" certainty with which Grandin writes virtually all her work seems to at least partly rest upon that equivalence. I will return to other possible implications and complicities of Grandin's tone of certainty, but it is worth noting here that its partial basis in Grandin's widely-received and generally-unchallenged claim that she can objectively transmit reality feeds my suspicion that we are not quite ready, as a culture, to have done with the fantasy

of an unmediated relationship to the environment, nor with a certain tendency to locate an oracle-like capacity for such a relationship in those we deem "simple" and pure—"from the mouths of babes," and so forth. Along these lines, Oliver Sacks's landmark description of Grandin as an "anthropologist on Mars" conjures up decidedly old-fashioned assumptions about the relationship between an anthropologist and her object of study: in the hyperbolic distance opened up between Grandin and "Mars," I discern a certain nostalgia for the old fantasy of the absolutely "fresh" encounter, which of course dates back to an era of anthropology marked by rampant, epistemically violent assumptions of objectivity. Generally, I want to begin tracing Grandin's articulation of some of our key narratives about food animals differently, by situating and interrogating—not merely affirming—her work's sources of cultural authority.

Yet before I delve deeper into these specific sources of authority and their implications for our reading of Grandin's work, it would be useful to more clearly delineate my methodological approach to the process of gleaning cultural narratives and conceptual apparatuses about animals from Grandin's work, and the specific ways that this approach departs from the presumption that Grandin's texts are straightforward, unmediated reflections of culture. As I will establish more fully below, Grandin materially and rhetorically works at a particularly potent intersection of two of the most powerful apparatuses of our time: neoliberal economics and science. Given this deeply consequential location, it makes sense to read Grandin as a cultural witness of sorts to the kinds of hegemonic logics and

narratives I am trying to identify here, rather than as a mere "tape recorder." The complexities of contemporary theories of the witness are useful: I try to read Grandin's works in a manner recently advocated by Dominick LaCapra as being "sensitive to processes whereby texts question themselves, as well as overly restrictive interpretations of them, and [which is] not reducible to their symptomatic, ideologically reinforcing tendencies, however important these may be" (15). As we shall see, aspects of Grandin's arguments do undermine her own overall, seemingly justificatory and status-quo-preserving purposes. Yet it is crucial not to respond to these cracks in Grandin's discourse in a way that either too quickly underestimates them as meaningless idiosyncrasies of the witness's testimony, or immediately appropriates them yet again into a merely more complex, yet still unmediated, picture of cultural attitudes. Both of these conclusions, to my mind, would risk interpreting Grandin's role as a cultural witness too reductively; both conclusions are inadequate to the task of refiguring what LaCapra identifies as a common tendency in witness theory: to contrast the experience of bearing witness as "the unmediated vision, the ineffable or unrepresentable experience itself" (63) against a definition of testimony that "is tantamount to a pressing, even necessary, descent or fall into inadequate discourse" (63). Against this binaristic definition of witness and testimony, I argue that if the voice and arguments in Grandin's books appear to be at once overtly self-certain and implicitly fraught, it is important to read such tensions in a mode that remains vigilant both to the conditions of production of their own

particular truth effects, and the ways they reflect and bring alive tensions in the broader culture.[25] For our purposes here, then, I deliberately read Grandin not as a "human tape recorder" of rhetoric about farm animals, but as a contingent witness to cultural justifications of intensive farming practices, whose testimony should be read in dialectical relation both outward to the type of narratives it symptomatizes, and inward to the conditions that would produce such (*New York Times* best-selling) testimony.

This approach to reading Grandin should help us apprehend the scope of her rhetoric's main frameworks of cultural authority, namely neoliberal economics and science. Grandin's work, both physically on the factory farm and in her books about it, generally operates within the terms of neoliberal and scientific logical imperatives. Consequently, the common-sense legitimacy of her work draws upon both a widespread acceptance of these imperatives, and her work's own immanent relation to them: her rhetoric rarely acknowledges ruptures of the logics at hand that would call attention to the operation of these frameworks as such. As we shall see, when Grandin's narrative does clash with an economic imperative—for instance, in her abhorrence of the living conditions of factory-farmed poultry—she tends not to frame the problem *in terms* of economics, and

[25] Here I am also attempting to historicize Grandin in a manner at least partly inspired by Ian Baucom's careful articulation of what it means to read dialectically between the general culture and the particular text in *Specters of the Atlantic*: "historicism must be understood not only as a means of accounting for phenomena by situating them within their moment and as a mode of constructing moments that account for phenomena, but also as a genre that typicalizes phenomena as exemplary representatives of their moments by deducing moments from a range of always-already typical phenomena" (45); or, "indeed, as ever, to read as best as possible both ways at once; to read, that is, dialectically; to work the 'trifling' particular and the general idea against one another…" (48).

thus the legitimacy of the underlying neoliberal framework remains more or less untouched.

Yet I want to emphasize that Grandin's work not only rests on the cultural conclusion that neoliberal economics and science *are* legitimate and authoritative, but also participates in the specific processes that *render* them so. With regard to science, first, the fact that Grandin's popular writing on animals is understood by both Grandin and her readers as having to do with especially *scientific* ideas and practices sets up a particular relationship between Grandin and her audience that takes Grandin's position as an "expert" to be self-evident. The cultural authoritativeness of the scientist is, as the field of science studies continues to explore, a complex product of the interface between the scientific method and institutional power.[26] While the empiricist methodology of working scientists ostensibly yields a heterogeneous, contingent, and mutable range of conclusions and processes, it is clear that we have come to view these relatively humble truth claims as more than the sum of their parts; not as merely one kind of truth claim among many, but as *the* way into truth. Bruno Latour attributes this understanding of science to an institutional set of legitimizing power relations, wherein "the sciences" are converted for public consumption into "Science": "I am going to define Science as *the politicization of the sciences through epistemology in order*

[26] These explorations stretch back at least to Thomas Kuhn's seminal work of critical science studies first published in 1962, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, in which he argues of "the classics" of science and science textbooks (and I argue that his assessment can be easily extended to popular science books like Grandin's), that "the aim of such books is persuasive and pedagogic; a concept of science drawn from them is no more likely to fit the enterprise that produced them than an image of a national culture drawn from a tourist brochure or a language text" (1).

to render ordinary political life impotent through the threat of an incontestable nature" (10). In other words, the epistemological hegemony of science arises less from the literal terms of the scientific method than it does from the way that science is naturalized and framed politically, as a privileged and differential mode of access to truth:

> the allegory of the Cave…organizes public life *into two houses*. The first is the obscure room depicted by Plato, in which ignorant people find themselves in chains…the second is located outside, in a world made up not of humans but of nonhumans…The genius of the model stems from the role played by a very small number of persons, the only ones capable of going back and forth between the two assemblies and converting the authority of one into that of the other. (Latour 13-14)

In this passage from *The Politics of Nature*, Latour helps bring into sharper relief the political stakes of apprehending Grandin's popular science as a form of cultural testimony: because we invest science and scientists with such authority—because we invest in them the unique power to interpret and bear witness to what for the rest of us is "unwitnessable" or "unrepresentable"—their testimony, or their subsequent fall into the "inadequate discourse" of popular science, potentially carries the weight of incontrovertibility. Ultimately, then, while unique autistic capacities may ground Grandin's claim that she has something to teach us about animal life, to a significant extent it is her situation of these lessons in terms of Science that legitimizes that claim for us, alongside the oracle-like quality of her autism that I mentioned at the outset, and the economic rationale to which I will turn below.

Moreover, though, I maintain that Grandin does not only inherit, but also actively participates in the epistemological hegemonization of Science, by rhetorically employing her chosen scientific epistemological frameworks in a manner that tends to exclude the legitimacy of any alternative frameworks in advance. While Grandin asserts her given frameworks only generally and in a kind of self-evident fashion, it is clear that her scientific arguments unfold more or less along broadly empirical, rationalist, and pragmatic lines[27]. Each of these scientifically inflected epistemological orientations is acceptable in our culture to the point of being common sense; subsequently, I argue, Grandin's nevertheless emphatic affirmation of their exclusive validity signals a pedagogical desire, on her part, to enforce a certain rendering of Science as the route to truth.

Pragmatism, for instance, is a central feature in Grandin's rhetoric; in one of innumerable examples, in *Animals in Translation* she writes glowingly of a 1959 USDA program to eradicate the screwworm using irradiated male pupae, because "it worked": it succeeded in saving the lives of screwworm-afflicted cattle. She regretfully suspects that such a project would never be approved now

[27] By "empirical" I refer rather generally to the modern scientific method's principle that knowledge is primarily gained through the accumulation of sensory data. Grandin emphasizes and draws upon her ability to accumulate and retain sensory data in a consistent fashion, throughout all of her books. By "rationalist," I refer generally to the application of deductive logic and reason. By "pragmatic," I refer, generally again, to the American philosophical effort to combine empiricism and rationalism in a way that seeks to continually privilege material practicality and "what works"—contributors to the volume *Animal Pragmatism* define this approach to knowledge as "the systemic alertness to the presence of consequences in all of our practices and decisions" (McDermott xi), and as a method that "starts from where we are and continually checks in with experience" (McKenna 162). While pragmatists emphasize the flexibility and democratic underpinnings of their enterprise, I would continue to question the ethical sufficiency of a doctrine that could so easily resemble, or be interpretable as, a means-end instrumental rationality substituting for ethics—not to mention the susceptibility of such a framework to co-option by neoliberal rhetoric, a problem to which I turn immediately below.

because "today the abstract thinkers are in charge, and abstract thinkers get locked into abstract debates and arguments that aren't based in reality" (28). Here, the self-legitimizing force of her pragmatism becomes strikingly evident, in a manner that only reinforces Richard Hofstadter's assertions about pervasive American attitudes toward intellectualism in his landmark 1963 treatise *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. Specifically, Hofstadter traces a long-held distinction between "intelligence" and "intellect" that helps explain how Grandin can impeach one kind of expert (the intellectual expert) as a means of shoring up the expertise of another (the practical expert). Intelligence, Hofstadter argues, "is an excellence of mind that is employed within a fairly narrow, immediate, and predictable range; it is a manipulative, adjustive, unfailingly practical quality" (25), while intellect "is the critical, creative, and contemplative side of mind. Whereas intelligence seeks to grasp, manipulate, reorder, adjust, intellect examines, ponders, wonders, theorizes, criticizes, imagines" (25). In implicitly declaring abstract intellect useless while privileging the worth of practical intelligence with regard to the screwworm—and generally throughout her books, with regard to the formulation of animal welfare policy, and the effort to gain knowledge about animal life, both of which I will turn to below—Grandin falls in line with what Hofstadter calls the "preponderant" preference for intelligence over intellect in American education.[28]

[28] See page 25 in Hofstadter: "In our education, for example, it has never been doubted that the selection and development of intelligence is a goal of central importance; but the extent to which education should foster intellect has been a matter of the most heated controversy, and the opponents of intellect in most spheres of public education have exercised preponderant power."

Significantly, of course, the expansive consideration of a multitude of possibilities inherent in "intellect" is the same orientation to thought that, as I argued in the previous chapter, is rendered disposable in the factory farm's zombie pedagogy of life. To cite Hofstadter once more, practical intelligence's mandate to work "within the framework of limited but clearly stated goals" engenders a form of thinking that "may be quick to shear away questions of thought that do not seem to help in reaching [those goals]" (25). Grandin's repeated pragmatic screeds against "abstract" thinking certainly suggest this kind of general approach to thought and knowledge, an approach that champions rather than suspects the narrowing of our frames of consideration.

Here, we can also gain a sense of how Grandin uses a pragmatic approach throughout her work in a way that effectively taps into the populist voice of the "straight shooter," the dealer in clear-cut practicalities, the outlaw/renegade that is unafraid to speak the truth. Grandin both relies upon and effaces her elite academic training in science by essentializing her allegiance to the modes of thought I have been tracing, including in her writing such untroubled assertions as that she is "a totally logical and scientific person…" (*Thinking* 222). Grandin thus presents herself as an essential *type* of person: an ahistorical type that just happens to mirror the prevailing epistemological frameworks of our time. This representation doubly advances her cultural authority in the current pedagogical landscape of anti-intellectualism, in that it both precludes any potential suspicion of Grandin as being a rarified intellectual expert, and reinforces our notion that

only certain types of people that embody certain priorities are worthy of our investment of trust.[29]

The sheen of irrefutability that cloaks Grandin's pragmatic rhetoric, however, represents something beyond the unveiling of a rather Republican Party-friendly persona, and something even more significant than Grandin's participation in hegemonizing scientific models of epistemology. To return to the example of the eradicated screwworm, what is left out from Grandin's assessment that "it worked"? In short, *every* consideration is left out of the equation except the health of the one species deemed valuable to the overall enterprise of the USDA: the cattle. The policy's possible consequences for the area's ecological system, for instance, are excluded from consideration in advance; Grandin only emphasizes the legitimacy of this exclusion in her derisive assertion that any potential concerns unrelated to the survival of cattle are borne of abstract—that is to say entirely useless, irrelevant, overly intellectualized—approaches to the problem at hand. Furthermore, her chagrin concerning any interference in enterprise by regulators undeniably falls in line with the contemporary neoliberal mandate of deregulation: protection of life should not emanate from the intellectual corners of government, but from within the apparatuses that "actually" get things done. In general, then, the kind of pragmatic approach that Grandin

[29] Here I am drawing from Baucom's analysis of personality type as a means of gauging security in a speculative financial social field: Baucom argues that we have learned to read social type as a means of biopolitically forecasting the future profitability and security of a given financial venture. Baucom insists that the relatively stable growth of the new speculative economy has been built on a mutual trust in future payoffs, grounded in the perceived integrity of the participating "types."

repeatedly advocates throughout her books is not only framed as being *a priori*-certain and single-minded, but also as being intrinsically oriented toward economic imperatives. In broader terms of Grandin's cultural authoritativeness, what I am trying to suggest here is that we can discern a potential collusion in Grandin's work between the radically attenuated imperatives of "pragmatic" reasoning of this stripe, and those of economic neoliberalism.

The particular aspect of neoliberalism to which I am referring here is its "regime of veridiction," in Foucault's words, or its current status as an epistemic scaffold that is generally understood as "not a law (*loi*) of truth, [but] the set of rules enabling one to establish which statements in a given discourse can be described as true or false" (*Birth* 35).[30] As in Grandin's framing of the screwworm, what is now often called "free-market fundamentalism" or "hyper-neoliberalism" has accustomed us, as a culture, to the practice I outlined in the previous chapter of confronting any given social or political problem through the lens of a single, radically narrowed economic imperative, at all costs—social, political, ethical, and so on. For my purpose here of situating Grandin's cultural cachet, I want to emphasize two main consequences of the current hegemonic, neoliberal form of epistemological fundamentalism. First, it both materially funds and rhetorically reinforces an intellectual climate in which Latour's version of "Science"—a consolidated, "objective," and privileged access to Truth delivered from on high—is rapidly coming to dominate not only the realm of popular

[30] Both "(loi)" and "[but]" are present in the original text.

science, but the very workplaces of scientists who might otherwise be committed to "forms of science that would be multiparadigmatic and critical and that attempt to be truly responsive to the common good for all in society" (Cannella and Miller 34). In short, the sciences are becoming beholden both to neoliberal institutional support and to neoliberal modes of epistemology that perpetuate the most reductive truth claims, and that encourage a cultural view of market-driven scientific knowledge as being a straightforward, pragmatic key for solving societal problems. In effect, the sciences become a significant site of expression for neoliberal doctrine, both in form and content. The second consequence of neoliberalism's fundamentalist prescriptive mode is, of course, related to the first: it becomes increasingly possible to participate in what Judith Butler has recently called the "paroxysm of anti-intellectualism" ("Implicated") that is currently sweeping North American culture—wherein the tendencies described by Hofstadter have arguably intensified under neoliberalism—*in and through* the process of producing and/or consuming popular science.

Understanding these consequences of the neoliberal-scientific turn not only helps us situate Grandin's own recourse to anti-intellectualism, or what she frames as a pragmatic commitment to "anti-abstractification"; it also provides more potential insight into her fraught search for largely weak-liberal or outright-neoliberal solutions to the inherently neoliberal crisis of animal well-being on the factory farm. Moreover, we can gain a deeper appreciation of Grandin's appeal: she is readable as authoritative, yet not intellectually elite or elitist; she acts to

improve conditions, yet does not call for uncomfortable changes, making her work palatable to conservatives of all stripes, neoliberal and neoconservative, as well as to anyone who simply does not wish to interrogate the cultural institution of large-scale meat-eating. She writes with soothing certainty; for instance, she posits that "[t]he problem with normal people is they're too cerebral" (*Translation* 27), and in another context, "[t]hat's because I don't have an unconscious" (92). In light of the cultural developments I have been tracing here, we can provisionally read Grandin's rhetorical tone of certainty itself as a manifestation of neoliberal logic, one that renders disposable all the forms of uncertainty, nuance, and generosity that I maintain are crucial to an ethical discourse worthy of the name.

Yet I have said that our justifications for factory farming often seem to be striving to divert attention *away* from its neoliberal pedagogy. In my focus on the ways that it might fail to do so, I do not wish to disqualify the possibility I also mentioned briefly, that this search for alternative narratives is grounded in our collective sense that there is something about being together in the world that is not grasped by market imperatives, or that as Henry Giroux and Susan Searls Giroux argue,

> In spite of claims made by market fundamentalists that economic growth will cure social ills, the market has no way of dealing with poverty, social inequality, or civil rights issues. It has no vocabulary for addressing respect, compassion, decency, and ethics or, for that matter, what it means to recognize antidemocratic forms of power. (9)

Significantly, despite or perhaps because she is complicit with the neoliberal-scientific enterprise, Grandin actively participates in the search for alternative vocabularies and imaginaries with which to approach the scene of the factory farm: the extent to which these narratives *succeed* in articulating something outside the neoliberal framework is, of course, another matter. In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss three of Grandin's ostensibly non-economic justificatory narratives of the factory farm. The constitutive terms of each narrative—or episteme, or discourse, or paradigm, or thought style, to cite other roughly analogous concepts for the ontological apparatuses I am trying to describe here[31]—claim to ground a kind of "complete" ontological scene, or *a priori* context, for the factory farm; however, ultimately it becomes clear that none of these narratives wholly fit the scenario. In other words, despite Grandin's best efforts, neither symbiosis, nor diametrical visions of human-animal "worlds," nor sacrifice are able to transcend the terms of neoliberal biopolitics to provide us with a non-economic ethical framework that can fully justify the status quo of factory farming.

[31] Of course, "episteme" and "discourse" are Foucault's earlier and later terms, respectively; "paradigm" is Kuhn's term for the "disciplinary matrices," among other constellations of structural concepts, that unify scientific communities; and "thought style" is a particularly provocative term for a similar concept coined by Barbara Herrnstein-Smith in her book on disciplinarity and science, *Scandalous Knowledge*.

Fantasies of Symbiosis

"Over the years I have done lots of thinking" Grandin writes in her latest book, *Animals Make Us Human*, "and have come to the conclusion that our relationship with the animals we use for food must be symbiotic. Symbiosis is a mutually beneficial relationship between two different living things" (297). In Grandin's application of a specifically mutualistic form of symbiosis to the situation of food animals here, what might seem to be straightforward is in fact complex. The "must" alone is arguably equivocal—is she calling for a symbiosis *l'avenir*; issuing a fervent call for more equitable relations on the farm? In other words, is she asserting the need for a new normative framework for our understanding of the farm, attempting to bring into being with the force of this "must" a new regulatory ideal of animal welfare? In these terms, would she be ultimately content with all farms being brought up to her welfare standards, which is her overt claim, or is there a hastily covered abolition wish at stake here? On the other hand, an assertion just as legible in light of Grandin's abiding faith in rationalist, deductive logic employs the "must" as the expression of a rational conclusion, the QED of a proof. Our relations on the farm *are* symbiotic, by definition, full stop. What might we make of this equivocality? I would suggest that it partly reflects and articulates the growing cultural tension between our faith in the market and its failure to deliver on its promise of well-being: on one hand, something seems very wrong; on the other, of course nothing fundamental needs to be changed, because the model promises mutual benefit.

I need to back up a bit here, of course, lest I imply a conflation of "symbiosis" and "the market." Instead, I want to mark symbiosis as a compelling conceptual apparatus in its own right, with both radical and conservative potentialities—one being that it can operate in a highly compatible way with prevailing economic logic. We are familiar with the radical potential of symbiosis in critical animal studies: as a conceptual tool of resistance against humanist rhetoric that tends to naturalize humanity's separation from "nature," many post-humanist scholars continue to emphasize humankind's more humble situation in a condition of ecological symbiosis with other living creatures. To cite just one example, H. Peter Steeves comments in *Animal Others* that "even the body is many. Thousands of parasites make their home on my body; yet even to say that they are 'on' my body is problematic. They partially constitute this body; we share it and we are it" (7). While such biologically symbiotic re-castings of the human are a welcome and perhaps necessary facet of the project to deconstruct the forceful symbolic barrier between humanity and nature, they are just that—a reality check of a particular kind, which should be used only to disabuse us of certain long-held ideologies about our physical constitution that have played their own specific role in buttressing the vast conceptual apparatus of human exception.

Along these lines, we should remain aware that as with most encompassing or "epistemic" concepts, symbiosis is also recuperable as a means of explaining away problems instead of working to solve them. One such conservative move, in my reading, would be the uncritical extrapolation of the

model of symbiosis to describe the *modus operandi* of the factory farm. Derrida cautions us not to slip too quickly into assuming symbiotic immersion or "continuism," arguing that "we should never be content to say, in spite of temptations, something like: the social, the political, and in them the value or exercise of sovereignty are merely disguised manifestations of animal force, or conflicts of true force, the truth of which is given to us by zoology . . ." (*Beast* 14). In such explanations of politics, Derrida locates the dangerous impetus to naturalize—thus immunizing against critique—what are in fact historical (and thus deconstructible) phenomena. In this case, describing the farm wholly in terms of symbiosis carries the potential to efface the compelling evidence I outlined in the first chapter, that the factory farm is more likely premised in a conceptual and material effort to immunize the human population completely from the entanglements, shared fates, co-dependence, and un-guaranteeable benefits of interacting with others in an ecological context. As I also argued in the previous chapter, these immunizing efforts include and are underwritten by neoliberal imperatives that exclude any consideration of the animals as "co-actors" in a symbiotic system. In other words, in its drive to remove the need and/or possibility for constitutive connections to be forged and maintained between beings, in favour of a more-easily instrumentalizable and disposable rubric of beings understood as an atomized array of consumable materials that are either profitable or not, I would suggest that the thoroughly neoliberal space of the

factory farm constitutively *rejects* symbiosis as a model of living-with.[32] Subsequently, reading the factory farm as if its logic is wholly immanent to that of mutualistic symbiosis ultimately does more to perpetuate the apparatus of human immunization than it does to take it apart: if we can use the descriptive model of symbiosis to explain all of our actions, then symbiosis ironically becomes the new ontological alibi—conceptual insurance—for human endeavor, the new Grand Unified Theory that permits no intervention. At its most extreme extrapolation, under this model the factory farm is figurable as merely the latest act of human solidarity with the lion eating the antelope's guts on the savannah, to evoke one of Grandin's oft-repeated descriptions of nature; or, in other words, the latest expression of a universal symbiosis that also implicitly justifies neoliberal biopolitics more generally.

To push things one step further, I caution at the outset not only against the tendency to frame symbiotic ontology in totalizing terms, but also against the tendency to conflate ontology with ethical inquiry. In *The Death of the Animal*, Paola Cavalieri discusses this phenomenon—which contradicts Hume's "logical point that it is always unwarranted to draw normative conclusions from descriptive premises" ("Death" 8)—as a common feature in "some views in

[32] An important distinction can be made on this point between the factory farm and more traditional forms of animal husbandry. While it is safe to say that discourses of human immunization are also in play at sites of traditional husbandry (nineteenth-century North American family farms, for instance), it is also true that traditional farms keep in closer rhythm with the non-human environment, mostly because doing so proves to encourage the most health and productivity for all involved—plants, humans, and other animals. In other words, while traditional sites of animal husbandry undoubtedly operate based on several "logics," I would suggest that their general modus operandi is more consistent with the concept of symbiosis.

environmental ethics," including "locat[ing] the ultimate value in the biotic community and determin[ing] the moral status of beings on the basis of their contribution…to the 'integrity, stability, and beauty' of the whole" (8). In *The New Ecological Order*, Luc Ferry identifies such a totalizing conflation between symbiosis and ethics as a potential basis for fascism.[33] Yet thinkers like Grandin (and Donna Haraway and Pollan, to cite two other examples of popular writers on the subject of animality whose popularity, I think, has something to do with this particular, subtle iteration of reactionary politics[34]) seem to draw some kind of moral or ethical conclusion from an invocation of what is really just a mode of description: symbiosis. For the most part, the ethical claim is implicit and relatively unexamined: whatever unfolds is ultimately acceptable because it is the way things are; it is the outcome of natural evolutionary and biological processes. Again, possibilities of living and thinking otherwise are rendered disposable—this time, in a supposedly laudable posthumanist effort to deny the human its grandiose and dangerous fantasy of separating itself from nature; but in the process, calcifying both ourselves and "nature" in the status quo of what has unfolded thus far. As I will argue, Grandin uses this ethical rendering of symbiosis to challenge practices that do not seem—to her—to fall under the rubric of mutualistic symbiosis, such as extreme ill treatment resulting in needless

[33] Ironically, however, Ferry posits an embrace of the liberal human subject and its expression in the free market as being a form of resistance to this kind of ecological totalizing. I am suggesting here, instead, that today's "free market" has appropriated ecological discourse to the extent that ontological-ethical conflation in symbiotic models actually comes to serve the ends of capital quite effectively.

[34] I should note here, though, that there are other useful concepts I see at work in Haraway's arguments—I do not mean to argue here that all of her work articulates a reactionary politics.

premature death. Yet overall, the figure of symbiosis allows Grandin to rest ethically in circular reasoning, forming an epistemological closed loop around the factory farm that initially evades our productive intervention.

By what specific means, then, does Grandin pedagogically employ symbiosis in a way that ultimately conserves the economic and biopolitical status quo? I argue, and I think Grandin's equivocality concerning whether the farm is yet a symbiotic space suggests, that models of mutualistic symbiosis need to be twisted and reduced considerably in order to convincingly describe the operation of the factory farm. Conveniently for the farming corporations, the direction of this twisting points to the fulfillment of short term economic efficiency that benefits very few (human) individuals, while claiming to benefit all parties, human and animal. Indeed, it is crucial to examine the selective re-inscription of symbiosis in Grandin's hands, from an ecological model that encompasses innumerable forms of mutual benefit—including, for example, the mutually beneficial mere proximity of elements in a given system—to a much more reductive view of "mutual benefit" premised solely in predator-prey relationships. Moreover, while Grandin attempts to characterize the factory farm human-animal relationship as one of mutuality, I would caution at the outset that the "benefit" for farm animals—bred, fed, and taken care of to the sole end of harvesting their bodies—again strains the model at hand considerably.

Before turning to specific moments in Grandin's texts that employ narratives of symbiosis, though, I should elaborate Grandin's methodology a little

more clearly. It is abundantly clear in Grandin's books that one of her primary navigation tools for understanding animal behaviour (human and otherwise) is sociobiology. Grandin stresses in *Animals in Translation* that she is not a strict behaviourist; that unlike B.F. Skinner's hegemonic episteme of her early days in animal science, she takes into account animal consciousness, desires, and learning capacities when assessing animal behaviour (*Translation* 9-15). This does not mean, however, that she has relinquished a determinist bent in her scientific approach to animal behaviour: in many cases, she seems merely to have adopted a more capacious behaviourism. Instead of Skinner's model, in which the scientist may only cite direct stimuli as a motivation for behaviour, Grandin's consciousness-inclusive model locates impetus in direct stimuli, but also in an animal's memories of past stimuli, and a host of drives and desires that have been instilled in animals as neural pathways and hormonal response systems, through the process of evolution. In this way, Grandin's approach works in accord with the dictates of cognitive science and evolutionary psychology, which are presently coming to occupy a hegemonic dominance across the sciences, social sciences, and even humanities. Barbara Herrnstein-Smith characterizes this approach as one of "reverse engineering," a method whose proponents claim can enable:

> identification of the underlying, innate mental mechanisms that govern all human behaviour, from incest-avoidance [to] female-adolescent anorexia…In supplying these identifications, it is said, evolutionary psychologists provide genuinely scientific explanations for human behaviours and cultural practices that, up to now, have been improperly or inadequately explained by other social scientists and, at best, merely "interpreted" in the humanities. (130)

The growing influence of this kind of approach to knowledge in academic inquiry signals a discernable streamlining of intellectual focus that falls in line, again, with both the anti-intellectual preference for narrowly applied intelligence over wide-ranging intellect as described by Hofstadter, and a growing compatibility between the academic pursuit of knowledge and the neoliberal zombie pedagogy of life. For example, while Emmanuel Levinas would assign messianic significance to the recognition of the other's face, Grandin cites the hormone oxytocin as the chemical impetus for face recognition in all animals (*Translation* 106).

In an important sense, this model *works*—"as far as it goes," again to use one of Grandin's favoured turns of phrase. Grandin has amassed large amounts of data, especially concerning the physiology and cognition of "prey species," and the scientific conclusions about individual animal behaviour that she draws from her data are sound and modest, in scientific terms. Moreover, I do not wish to create the impression that Grandin commits the all-too-common explanatory error concerning evolution as a scientific model: that evolution operates with a sense of immanently deterministic purpose.[35] She is careful to assert that "you can't know

[35] While Grandin more or less steers clear of many of the pitfalls of evolutionary psychology, we should remain vigilant in her work concerning the potential for such pitfalls, if only because the discipline is so seductively concerned with what Barbara Herrnstein-Smith calls "the unusually preemptive nature of its claims" (130): for instance, "the unremittingly purposive, rational idiom of evolutionary psychology: 'genes for', designed for', natural selection as the ever-ingenious 'engineer' of fitness optimizing 'devices' and so forth" (138). For a writer who does regularly commit such errors, see Michael Pollan's widely read, *New York Times*-bestselling *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. For example: "in fact it makes just as much sense to regard agriculture as a brilliant (if unconscious) evolutionary strategy on the part of the plants and animals involved to get us to advance their interests" (23), and later: "corn completely threw its lot in with humanity when it evolved its peculiar husked ear…So far, this reckless-seeming act of evolutionary faith in us has

why one thing evolved and another thing didn't, and it's a mistake to assume that everything we see in nature serves a purpose" (*Translation* 204). However, I want to suggest again that it is in her particular effort to apply this framework to the situation of factory-farmed food animals that considerable stretching and attenuating of the very concept of symbiosis is necessary to make it fit.

Grandin lays the groundwork for this stretching in her considerable attention, throughout all of her books, to the attributes of species that have evolved in tandem with their general predator or prey status in the wild. What is the significance of the implicit premise in Grandin's work that all animals primarily act according to their status as predator, prey, or scavenger, despite the crack in that model she herself introduces—that autistic people behave and experience the world like prey animals do? I suggest in what follows that a strict emphasis upon a specifically predator-prey rendering of symbiosis—when the relationship between predator and prey is just one of innumerable symbiotic relationships—shapes a pedagogy of human and animal life that focuses solely upon the biopolitical valence of death and death-dealing, constitutively leaving out all consideration of how we should *live* with one another. In doing so, this focus sets the stage for a possible rendering of the interspecies scene of the factory farm that is more amenable to neoliberal logics of zero-sum competition and a legitimized vanquishing of the "losers" than a model of symbiosis might

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been richly rewarded" (27). The error here might be primarily rhetorical rather than strictly logical, since I (generously) suspect that such comments are more than a little bit tongue-in-cheek, but I also suspect his caveat "(if unconscious)" may lose rhetorical force given the seductiveness of the overall descriptions.

otherwise suggest. Furthermore, reducing relationality to a matter of one's status as predator or prey helps reinforce zombie pedagogy's premise that self-interested consumption in the effort to avoid death is the only salient feature of being-with-others.

Grandin continually attributes physiological differences among animals to the evolutionary determinism of predator and prey categories; for instance, she cites the evolutionary utility of a prey animal's side placement of its eyes for the purposes of panoramic vision, while predator species have developed frontally placed eyes in tandem with their need to chase other animals (*Translation* 40-41, *Thinking* 168). Significantly, though, Grandin also interprets the emergence of animal consciousness according to a given animal's predator/prey status. In her effort to understand the seemingly automatic (read: "instinctual") animal behaviour of orienting oneself to the location of a sound, Grandin concludes that "the orienting response is the beginning of consciousness, because the animal has to make a conscious decision about what to do about that sound. If he's a prey animal, should he run? If he's a predator, does he need to chase something? A predator might need to flee, too, of course, so a predator actually has two decisions to make" (*Translation* 49). Symbiotic relations, then—interpreted, as I have argued, according to a rather winnowed version of predator-prey symbiosis—carry far more than incidental importance in Grandin's model of epistemology; they appear to underwrite it in a fundamental way. An animal's membership in a prey species carries an intelligible set of epistemological

conclusions about its worldview: this is the premise of both Grandin's books on animals and her career as a farming consultant. Along these lines, Grandin repeatedly articulates a conceptual apparatus that understands another animal's epistemology—a cow's unwillingness to move from a brightly lit area to a dark building, for instance (*Translation* 22-23)—as a function of its symbiotic role in the predator-prey context within which it has evolved.

Yet I want to emphasize again that Grandin does not engage in a wholesale evolutionary determinism at every turn: perhaps the best example of Grandin's precision on this score is the fact that she assigns no special ontological significance to the sensory affinities between autistic people and prey animals: she certainly does not argue that the possession of prey animal characteristics *renders* autistics into prey, or that autistics have such characteristics *because* they are prey. Instead, she frames the affinities autistics share with prey species like cattle—"thinking in pictures" instead of language, extreme sensory awareness and sensitivity, thinking in visual details instead of abstract generalizations, to name a few of her examples—in terms of mutations in the brain structures of autistic people, which she writes at length about, comparing them to wiring and processing problems in a computer. Her capacity for evolutionary subtlety is clear, too, concerning the co-evolution of dogs and humans—the fact that "new research shows that wolves probably domesticated people, too. Humans *co-evolved* with wolves; we changed them and they changed us" (*Translation* 303). Surely, anyone trying to make sense of Haraway's claim that dogs and humans

"make each other up, in the flesh" (*Companion* 2-3) should refer to Grandin's summaries of the research on dog-human evolution: in her characteristically direct style, they are particularly lucid accounts.

It is when the discussion of predator-prey symbiosis turns away from humans and animals in general, and toward the factory farm, that Grandin's emphasis upon predator/prey roles in the symbiotic scene seems to acquire its most determinist and essentialist bent. It is clear that Grandin is not entirely comfortable with humans using farmed animals for food as a model of symbiosis. To cite one of many instances in which unsettled affect attends Grandin's work with farms and slaughterhouses, she writes that her response to one of her first career successes was that "I was upset that I had just designed a really efficient slaughter plant. Cows are the animals I love best" (*Translation* 307). There are several possible readings of Grandin's affective unsettlement, of course: we would need to grapple with Grandin's affective identification with other animals, to which she alludes throughout her work; yet we would also have to consider the disturbance to Grandin's avowedly rational worldview that might accompany the considerable logical strain involved in making "symbiosis" fit the scene of the factory farm. Leaving such questions hanging for the moment, we need to revisit how statically she renders interspecies mutualism with regard to killing and eating—how locked we are within certain modes of predation and preyhood. Interestingly, when Grandin distinguishes instincts from learned behaviour in animals, she uses an animal's understanding of what constitutes "food" as her

illustration, asserting that "everything an animal does to act on his emotions, *except* for the fixed action pattern [in this case, how to make a killing bite], is learned…Strange as it may sound, a dog has to learn from other dogs that groundhogs are good to eat" (*Translation* 137). Ostensibly, then, humans have to learn from other humans that factory farmed hogs are good to eat; this model does not ultimately license us to naturalize the interspecies symbiotic relationship on the factory farm to the point of deeming our relation to those hogs and cows a matter of unassailable instinct. I cannot help but be reminded of the fact that Derrida makes an analogous distinction in his interview with Jean-Luc Nancy, "'Eating Well,'" to which I will return in the following chapter: "since *one must* eat in any case" (282), "the question will come back to determining the best, most respectful, most grateful, and also most giving way of relating to the other and of relating the other to the self" (281-82). We need to eat—this is the deterministic element of symbiosis for both Derrida and Grandin—but I would suggest that the moment of potential intervention in modes of symbiosis, the non-deterministic moment, is the moment of deciding how *and what* to eat.

Formally, then, it would seem that Grandin articulates a general model of mutualistic symbiosis that leaves open the possibility for adaptation, flexibility, perhaps agency, between actors in the system—even with regard to the specific predator-prey relations concerning "who" eats "whom." Despite her seeming

discomfort with the current relationship between humans and food animals,[36] however, Grandin ultimately maintains the conservative position that factory farms are not only inevitable, but that they fit the definition of mutualistic symbiosis, however fitfully: "[p]eople feed, shelter, and breed cattle and hogs, and in return the animals provide food and clothing" (*Thinking* 235).[37] Conceptually, it may be possible for animals (including humans) to learn new ways to "eat well," but for Grandin such flexibility does not extend to reconsidering the necessity of meat in the human diet. She writes in *Animals in Translation*:

> If I had my druthers humans would have evolved to be plant eaters, so we wouldn't have to kill other animals for food. But we didn't, and I don't see the human race converting to vegetarianism anytime soon. I've tried to eat vegetarian myself, and I haven't been able to manage it physically. I get the same feeling you get with hypoglycemia; I get dizzy and light-headed, and I can't think straight. (179)

Grandin's negative physical experience with vegetarianism leads her to conclude that in order to "eat well," human beings must eat meat—that our mode of symbiosis is at least partly determined by biological structures that necessitate predation. For a scientist, trained to extrapolate only under the most thoroughly controlled conditions, Grandin rather scantily substantiates her link between

[36] To cite another of many examples of Grandin's discomfort: "It is a sobering experience to be a caring person, yet design a device that will kill large numbers of animals. When I completed this project, I had a feeling of great satisfaction knowing that the animals were going to be treated with care right to the end, but still I cried all the way to the airport" (*Humane* 207). Again, there are multiple ways to read such discomfort. In addition to the possibilities I have already cited, there is the possibility that Grandin feels an explicit performance of affect is required in the wake of work she knows others see as killingly violent.

[37] Of course, as I have already argued, the designation of "mutualism" to such an account calls for more thorough questioning. Two immediate complications are immediately apparent; first, here Grandin omits reference to our *breeding* of these animals, presumably in the effort to preserve a kind of "level playing field" sense of ecological equilibrium, and second, "in return the animals provide…" would require thorough parsing for the extremity of its rhetorical use of euphemism alone.

personal experience and general human biological need. The rhetorical link nevertheless made, however, she continues:

> So until someone proves otherwise I'm operating from the hypothesis that at least some people are genetically built so that they *have* to have meat to function. Even if that's not so, the fact that humans evolved as both plant and meat eaters means that the vast majority of human beings are going to continue to eat both. Humans are animals, too, and we do what our animal natures tell us to do. (180)

I cite the above passage in its entirety because it marks a crucial turn in Grandin's argument. Grandin rhetorically suspends her prior distinction between the biological drive to eat (in some cases, the biological necessity to eat meat), and the socio-cultural decision concerning *what* to eat within those broad biological parameters, in favour of the vaguely determinist assertion that "we do what our animal natures tell us to do." With this assertion, Grandin rhetorically assimilates the biological determinism of her assertion that "at least some people are genetically built" to require meat, with her speculation about the prospects of our cultural decisions of how to eat well—that "the vast majority of human beings are going to continue to eat both [plants and animals]." It seems that in the wake of determinist biological decisions about vegetarianism, Grandin forecloses the possibilities inherent in the notion of eating well—the idea that choosing what to eat is a learned and mutable decision—and chooses to consign human-animal symbiosis to the operation of the factory farm. As much is clear in the paragraph that immediately follows the above passage, which begins: "[t]hat means we're going to continue to have feedlots and slaughterhouses, so the question is: what should a humane feedlot and slaughterhouse be like?" (*Translation* 180).

In other words, Grandin's assimilation of biological determinism and food choice that I have been tracing here leads her to read the factory farm through a symbiotically determinist lens. "[W]e're going to continue to have feedlots and slaughterhouses" at least partly *because* we evolved to eat meat. There are several possible reasons for this extension of Grandin's model—the use of pragmatism as a social lubricant for welfare improvements perhaps chief among them—past the necessity of "at least some" humans eating some meat, to the symbiotic necessity of maintaining feedlots and factory farms. To be clear, this move does constitute quite the extension of her argument, since the number of animals processed at feedlots and factory farms far exceeds the number necessary to provide "at least some people" who "need meat to function" with the biologically necessary amount. Moreover, Grandin's leap from the necessity of some meat eating to the necessity of factory farming is especially conspicuous given the minority, yet growing, cultural discourse around small-scale farming in North America as an alternative to factory farm meat production. Here, I am not condemning Grandin for resigning herself to the existence of large-scale farms as much as I am trying to trace how, for all of us, such acceptance relies upon a certain conceptual process of calcifying and essentializing our supposed roles in the predator-prey dynamic.

I would further suggest that the very structure of the factory farm models and reinforces this rigidity for us: we have ostensibly eliminated the tenuousness of the predator-prey relationship in the wild, for on the factory farm we have

ensured that our prey—built to flee, by definition—can never escape; and that as predators we no longer have to chase down our prey. Our role as ultimate predators is thus modeled as being natural and final on the factory farm, but in a slippery way that also naturalizes a notion that we have attained a position entirely above predation. Fully natural, yet fully separated from nature, this pedagogical rendering of "symbiosis" teaches us that we are now in an incontestable position to instrumentalize other animals and subject them to the prevailing economic apparatus.[38]

What does this consolidation of our transcendent predatory position imply about the claim that symbiosis between humans and food animals is mutualistic, benefiting all? In her discussion of our genetic selection of farm animals, Grandin implies that the factory farming ethos does not necessarily match the symbiotic model that renders a level playing field of incidental selection pressures: instead, "when it comes to domestic animals, *we're the environment*. We create the selection pressures" (*Translation* 73). Significantly, Grandin implicitly distinguishes traditional forms of husbandry from factory farming practices in this regard, suggesting that "unconscious" selective breeding is often mutually beneficial for humans and animals, unlike the single-minded single-trait breeding that has become ubiquitous on factory farms, which produces what Grandin calls "warped evolution," full of unintended consequences that derail the thriving of

[38] Of course, recent evidence suggests that this pedagogical claim is under considerable pressure from the nonhuman world: as I noted in the previous chapter, many of our efforts to immunize ourselves from the vagaries of ecological symbiosis are evidently triggering an auto-immune response, allowing the threats of the nonhuman world—now manifesting as, for example, antibiotic-resistant superbugs—back into our lives through unexpected doors.

animal populations (*Translation* 72, 77). We are the environment, or at least a key part of it, in any context of husbandry; but Grandin identifies as "natural"—and as usually more mutually beneficial—the situations in which "nobody was doing anything on purpose to affect the pigs' evolution" (80).

If the factory farm is a site, then, of our thorough effort to exclude the incidental selection pressures that characterize mutualistic symbiosis in the wild, could Grandin's welfare improvements ever sufficiently transform the factory farm into a site of mutual benefit? Evidently, she fervently wishes to affirm this possibility: here, I return to her assertion that "people feed, shelter, and breed cattle and hogs, and in return the animals provide food and clothing" (*Thinking* 235). In this rendering, mutualistic symbiosis is supposedly manifested in a kind of liberal contract; an almost desperate insistence that mutual benefit can be ensured, especially once the quality of feed, shelter, and treatment are brought up to snuff.[39] Yet there is a conceptual slippage here: an interspecies welfare contract instituted at a deeply over-determined site of human dominance is simply not the same as a relationship that is definable as symbiotic according to the principles of evolution that we have been discussing. However, ultimately Grandin rhetorically naturalizes the operation of the factory farm along such lines in her assertion that "If I had a choice, I would rather go through a slaughter system than have my guts ripped out by coyotes or lions while I was still conscious" (*Thinking* 235). Most of

[39] In fact, Grandin (*Thinking* 235) explicitly "adds" the notion of symbiosis to a theory of "the ancient contract" articulated by Stephen Budiansky in U.S. News and World Report. The article in question presents on its own a rather rosy amalgam of evolutionary symbiosis theory and humanist species paternalism: "The animals that come under man's care are following out their evolutionary destiny—and are flourishing as a consequence" (79).

us may have a similar preference, but we should not overlook the consequences of making such a comparison, not the least of which is the fact that such an analogy completely overlooks the facts of animal life in favour of an exclusive focus on animal death: arguably the most consequential features of our biopolitical relationship with food animals, namely breeding and totalized confinement, are entirely absent from the analogy at hand. Yet even on its own terms, apart from that significant omission, the analogy rhetorically naturalizes the factory farm as merely the latest—and perhaps "best"?—scene of interspecies symbiosis; moreover, a potential insight into the complicity between this appropriation and the economic imperatives that condition the factory farm is foreclosed. Again, instead, through this particular figuration of symbiosis, our position is simultaneously naturalized as both safely above, and wholly ensconced within, the ecological scene; with the consequence that we are dually licensed to treat animals in whatever ways we desire, despite Grandin's insistence that we owe animals a certain type of treatment.[40] In other words, to control the lives and bodies of animals to our ends in a context of neoliberal instrumental rationality becomes readable as an *expression* of our participation in the rhythms of nature.

To be sure, throughout her books, Grandin links her welfare measures to the realization of increased economic efficiency and profit; for instance, she notes that "these methods not only benefit welfare but also increase productivity and profit, improve meat quality, reduce illness, lower mortality rates, and prevent

[40] See, for instance, the "Stairway to Heaven" chapter of *Thinking in Pictures*: "We owe it to the animals to give them decent living conditions and a painless death" (235).

injuries to both animals and people" (*Humane* 1). I argue that, given her naturalization of the factory farm as a potentially symbiotic site, this link cannot be read *solely* as a politically strategic appeal to factory farm operators to adopt better welfare measures, even if it is wholly intended to be such. Instead, in the context of a naturalized appeal to symbiosis on the factory farm, the link between welfare and economic efficiency unavoidably also naturalizes—and goes some rhetorical distance towards immunizing from critique—the non-symbiotic market-based logic that underwrites the farm.

I would suspect that Grandin, committed as she so clearly is to the project of reforming the factory farm, does not fully intend to place the practice of intensive farming above reproach. Again, I emphasize that her work unfolds in necessary conjunction with extremely powerful conceptual and economic apparatuses that, I'm sure she would argue from a pragmatic standpoint, require some degree of negotiated compliance in order to effect any kind of transformation at all. However, it is important to note that her work's complicity with a conservative iteration of symbiosis is supported by a similarly status-quo rendering of animal epistemology and of the ethical uses of sacrifice, to which I turn in the following sections. Again, my primary intent is not to condemn Grandin for not being radical enough in her reform efforts, but to illustrate how easily elements of factory farm pedagogy can come to inflect seemingly alternative pedagogical frameworks for explaining the site.

Fantasies of World

I have already noted that Grandin relies upon theories of animal epistemology in her work. In this section, I turn more directly to such theories, and investigate their intersections and complicities with the narratives we tend to articulate about the animals we use for food. Our beliefs about animal epistemology—what an animal can know about its surroundings—are deeply consequential for our ethical and material relationships to such animals. In this register, I argue that Grandin offers us lessons about animal life in her books that have intimately to do with questions traditionally reserved for the field of philosophy. While one might readily assume that philosophy would be the realm in which the critical approach to thought that Hofstadter terms "intellect" is given free expression at every turn, critical animal studies continues to yield the conclusion that much canonical philosophy is riddled with dogma on the question of the animal. Here, I read Grandin's claims about animal epistemology as ultimately participating in this dogmatic strain of philosophizing, by reading her work alongside the animal-related work of Martin Heidegger. In most respects, the two thinkers could not differ more sharply; however, in their pedagogical interventions on animal life, they reveal together the ways that it becomes possible to strip down what I have been suggesting throughout this dissertation is an infinite number of possible animal experiences, to rest at a radically limited picture of animal life—one that is compatible with the neoliberal biopolitics of factory farm pedagogy. I argue that Grandin's concentrated attention to an

animal's "world" both challenges and perpetuates our comfort with the status quo of food animal domestication, but ultimately rests at a position of conservatism, at least with regard to the institutional maintenance of factory farms. Overall, in framing animal epistemology more or less along traditionally "rationalist" lines—that the animal can generally be presumed to be captivated by its environment, immersed uncritically in the thrall of stimuli—Grandin reinscribes powerful, old definitions of animal epistemology that are not easily outweighed by her efforts to redistribute value across both sides of the human-animal epistemology divide, nor by her efforts to emphasize an autistic exception to the binary that she herself continually maintains between the epistemology of "the animal" and that of "normal" human beings. Of course, Grandin's ultimate conservatism on this score has inherent implications for our accepted narrative of the factory farm: if an animal's experience of the world is accepted as being entirely immanent to that world, then there remains little reason to abandon the factory farm, as long as the animal's moment-to-moment experience can be as pleasant as possible. Again, the certainty with which we cling to this rendering of the animal's world as being the indisputable truth also feeds a neoliberal imperative of not only depoliticizing the scene at hand, but of drastically attenuating the ethical possibilities we are asked to confront in assessing the site of the factory farm.

It is important to note at the outset that in her assertions about the epistemologies held by animals, Grandin makes a compelling—and again, ambivalent—intervention on the subject of anthropomorphism. The ethics of

anthropomorphic projection continue to be hotly debated in critical animal studies, which is a field that currently seems to be attempting to steer a middle course between the rock of naively assuming knowledge of animal epistemology on one hand, and the hard place of too rigidly denying the possibility of ever knowing anything about animal experience on the other. In general, I would suggest that many in the field are arriving at the conclusion that some form of human identification with other animals is ethically and even scientifically preferable to what evolutionary scientist Elliott Sober calls "anthropodenial." Continued careful interrogation of these questions is surely necessary in the wake of continued anthropomorphic identifications, both within and beyond animal studies, that as Derrida says of Heidegger's theory of animal "world," "reintroduce the measure of man by the very route it claimed to be withdrawing from that measure" (*Of Spirit* 49). Theories of animal rights, for instance, tend to be premised upon the recognition of traits in other animals that are sufficiently similar to human traits to warrant our ethical consideration—thus doing little to dissect the supposed superiority of human traits. A key strength of the field of animal studies is its commitment to the careful parsing of such questions.

Taken in its totality, then, the interdisciplinary field of animal studies that includes both sciences and the humanities appears to be opening up countless avenues for dwelling with the question of anthropomorphism—a development that is, of course, in direct opposition to a neoliberal tendency to winnow down the possible ways to interpret animal life. "Efficient" thinking about animals, as I

have been suggesting, helps pave the way for efficient policies and practices regarding our economic uses of animals. Conversely, the diverse interface between the sciences and the humanities that is currently unfolding on the question of the animal carries the potential to mount a certain "epistemological resistance" to the narrowing focus of neoliberal logic: both the sciences and the humanities are integral to this particular form of resistance, as they mutually propel new thought in the productive clash of their approaches.

Along these lines, as the recent interdisciplinary animal studies anthology *Thinking With Animals: New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism* suggests, we have much to learn from scientific inquiry on the subject of anthropomorphism. Elliott Sober, for instance, investigates the history of the principle of cladistic parsimony—the scientific tendency not to presume psychological similarities between species in the wake of discerning similar behaviours—and concludes that at times, according to the very principle that would seem to encourage "anthropodenial," it can actually be more parsimonious to assume a psychological similarity between us and other animals (95-96).[41] Scientifically speaking, in Grandin's words, the "fact that it's impossible to know what it's like to be a bat doesn't mean it's impossible to know *anything* about being a bat" (*Translation* 254).

[41] The subsequent essay, by Sandra D. Mitchell, makes a similar argument for empiricism, arguing that we may be able to discern more epistemological similarities between humans and other species by "look[ing] to the similarity or dissimilarity of neurophysiological structure, sensory apparatus, and so on. And, importantly, we can look to behavioral observations and experimentation" (110).

Fine. Yet I am struck by Elliot Sober's provocatively blunt final assertion in his otherwise modest essay: "The only prophylactic we need is empiricism" (97). Is this really the sole direction we want to take animal studies? My short answer is No. To my mind, reducing the rich questions of anthropomorphism and human-animal identification to one approach, and a scientific one at that, would undo the epistemological resistance that is growing in critical animal studies—resistance to the neoliberal imperative to think efficiently and single-mindedly about animals. Significantly, limiting the field to empirical thought omits the intellectual inquiry of the humanities, which is undoubtedly fundamental in propelling the continued proliferation of possibilities for and of animal life. What of the qualities of animal life that are perhaps not empirically deducible? So many aspects of human-animal identification are incompatible with empirical inquiry, and this is a good thing; it encourages us, in Matthew Calarco's words, to "proceed agnostically and generously, as if we might have missed or misinterpreted the Other's trace" ("Toward" 81). On the subject of animal experience, however, Grandin is more or less willing to rely upon recent empirical forays into shared interspecies characteristics to frame her conclusions about human-animal identification, which ultimately and ironically enables her to convert her intense empathy for animals into a legitimization of the factory farm.

It is not that Grandin is unaware of the potential pitfalls of anthropomorphic projection: after all, as she notes, she came of age as a scientist at a time when "both the ethologists and the behaviorists were in total agreement

that practically the worst thing anyone could possibly do was to *anthropomorphize* an animal" (*Translation* 14). I do not fault Grandin's contention, in the midst of this consensus, that "I still believed it was important to think about the animal's point of view" (15). The problem arises in the fact that Grandin seems convinced that she has gathered enough empirical data about animal behaviour and physiology that she is now fully able to apprehend animal epistemology. This conclusion is perhaps the worst consequence of her exclusive faith in the visual register of knowledge, and her failure to see such faith—a kind of totalizing "seeing is believing" epistemology—as complicit with a set of "concepts about animals" that would render animal minds as wholly presumable. Of her first efforts to "try to see what the cattle were seeing," Grandin writes "[n]ow I realize that in my own way I was being just as anthropomorphic as those people who gave the lion the pillow [in reference to a story she claims circulated as a classic cautionary tale against anthropomorphism: a lion choked to death on a pillow that was meant to provide him comfort while sleeping]. Since I was a visual thinker I assumed cows were, too. The difference was I happened to be right" (*Translation* 19). *Presumption* about animal epistemology is figured here in the past tense; her current orientation to animal epistemology is implicitly certain, *not* presumed. Grandin reiterates this sense of certainty in *Thinking in Pictures*:

> I don't have any difficulty imagining myself as the animal. *But to be able to do this without being anthropomorphic*, I have spent years observing animals behaving in different situations. I'm always adding additional information to my [mental] library of information by reading books and articles about animal behavior…. (200, emphasis added)

In other words, Grandin seems to be asserting that her accumulation of empirical data on animals has earned her a kind of anthropomorphism that is not only "correct," but in a certain sense, unassailable. The scientific method's constitutive preference for parsimony is, I suggest, often fairly easily overridden by a totalized sense of certainty in contexts where empiricism is framed as the sole approach to truth.

Without question, Grandin has become especially attuned to the ways farm animals react to stimuli. Grandin rarely strays from describing how individual animals she has encountered behave in various situations. Just as Derrida wished to stress that he was talking about a "real cat, truly, believe me, *a little cat*" (*Animal* 6)—noting in turn that such an emphasis is rare among philosophers—Grandin wishes to direct our focus upon "actual" bodily animals, not just our concepts of animals. Pragmatically refreshing though such a focus may seem, however, it is crucial to remember that Grandin presumes we can forever separate "actuality" from concepts, in a way Derrida does not. To return to her suspicion of abstract thought, in *Animals in Translation*, she vehemently opposes those who would "overabstractify" animals, arguing that such modes of thinking can ultimately hurt the animals that abstract thinkers mean to help. Zero-tolerance welfare standards, for instance, can only ever operate as a legal fiction achieved through creative paperwork, done by regulators who are "focused on their *thoughts* about the animals, not on the real animals in the real plants, so more animals end up suffering" (29). As in the screwworm scenario, here Grandin

frames government regulation as the enemy of effective action, and rhetorically links such regulation with extraneous, superfluous, abstract intellect. Grandin complains that abstract welfare standards tend to be focused on "*inputs*, such as maintenance schedules, employee training records, and equipment design problems, instead of *outputs*, which is how the animals are actually doing" (*Translation* 269). Her frustrated response to this phenomenon is that "I don't care about floors. I care about cows. Are they falling down? That's all I need to know" (269).

I have said that Grandin's focus upon her observations of animals is refreshing to read, and her attention to animal behaviour is undoubtedly both necessary and sorely underrepresented—interestingly enough—in the field of critical animal studies. Yet such attention falls far short of sufficiently apprehending animals or human-animal relationships, on the farm or elsewhere. Her comment about welfare and rights reformists who think more abstractly than she does about animals—that "[t]he whole thing would be about ideology, not reality" (*Translation* 28)—helps illustrate the problem. Because she does not point to the ways that the "reality" she cites *is* ideological, in both its structural conditions and her perception and theorization of it, it is crucial that we begin to explicitly draw out her ideology of animal and human worlds so that we may better understand its material and ethical consequences.

To this end, I turn here to Heidegger's well-known meditations on human and animal "worlds." Heidegger takes a very different approach to science than

Grandin; after all, he argues that "[s]ciences are ways and kinds of philosophizing, not the reverse: philosophy is not a science" (32). This assertion is, of course, not a rejection of scientific inquiry but a qualifying of it; and in seeking to substantiate his philosophical claims about animals, he does not hesitate to draw on the work of scientists like Jakob von Uexküll. Despite their differences on the subject of empiricism, both Grandin and Heidegger use scientific observations to help articulate similar dogmas concerning how to assess animal experience; however, I think this is less an indictment of science and more a matter of the potential for empiricism to be employed for conservative ends, a potential I have been noting throughout this chapter. Heidegger asserts, with uncharacteristic certainty, that an animal's orientation to its world is one of complete, un-reflexive immersion—a "poverty in world" determined by "being held captive to the disinhibiting ring" of stimuli (269)—whereas human *Dasein* is constituted by being "world-forming," or having the capacity to apprehend objects and beings in its surroundings *as such*. Heidegger maintains this stark distinction despite his avowed intention to rethink the species hierarchy in his analysis of animal life, life which he argues "possesses a wealth of openness with which the human world may have nothing to compare" (255). In other words, Heidegger is novel among philosophers up to his time in citing the alterity of animals as both ethically significant, and as being a quality that exists independently of previously imposed hierarchies of species. As Calarco notes in *Zoontologies*, Heidegger is

one of the first contemporary philosophers to attempt seriously theorizing an animal's life from the animal's perspective, on its own particular terms (20).

So, what gets in the way of Heidegger's attention to animal alterity on its own terms? What makes it ultimately the case that as Derrida argues, Heidegger's analysis "remains bound to reintroduce the measure of man by the very route it claimed to be withdrawing from that measure" (*Of Spirit* 49)? Ironically, it is in the very link Heidegger makes between human and animal experience of the world that the re-introduction of hierarchy emerges. First, the very description of animal world vis-à-vis human world is based on the relative deprivation of the animal. As David Farrell Krell observes, Heidegger "defines the poverty of the animal world in terms of deprivation without for the moment wondering whether all the talk of deprivation does not reinstate all the hierarchies he would have wanted to dismantle" (115). Moreover, as Derrida notes, the anthropocentrism lies not just in the negative designation, but also in the sheer anthropocentrism that such a designation relies upon: in Heidegger's account, it seems that animal world "can appear as such and gain meaning only from a non-animal world, and from *our* point of view" (*Of Spirit* 50). Yet Heidegger's implicit hierarchization goes even further, when he describes the link between humans and other animals in a way that implies a somewhat teleological species hierarchy. To cite Giorgio Agamben's succinct summation of human *Dasein*'s profound boredom, it seems Heidegger is suggesting that "Dasein is simply an animal that has learned to become bored; it has awakened *from* its own captivation *to* its own captivation"

(*The Open* 70). On one hand, like an animal, a human being can experience a form of captivation to its environment. On the other, the human form of captivation operates in what Leonard Lawlor might call "staggered analogy" with the captivation of the animal: resulting from a stage of development figured as succeeding or exceeding the animal form of captivation, the human form of captivation is figured as being of a second order. Fundamentally, then, in Heidegger's account, the animal is not just different, but deprived.

How does Grandin make similar twists and turns, from her avowed desire to re-value animal experience according to a broad spectrum of supposedly "value-free" differences, to the subtle re-inscription of a hierarchy of human-animal experience that ultimately validates factory farming? First, to be sure, it is crucial to admit that Grandin makes strong interventions on the subject of valuing differences. Her radicality in this instance consists in her re-estimation of "trait value," and in her emphasis upon a beneficial epistemological diversity in the human community, with autism as her most prominent example. Grandin asserts that this diversity, moreover, can open up new, seemingly more complex avenues of identification with other animals. Having been told that the act of thinking and the state of consciousness depend upon the capacity for language, Grandin strongly asserts that both animals and non-verbal humans do think; they merely think otherwise. For instance, since she claims to mentally engineer her inventions using only images, not words, she deems the necessity of language for tool-making "ridiculous" (*Thinking* 11), and argues that "[d]ifferences between

language-based thought and picture-based thought may explain why artists and accountants fail to understand each other. They are like apples and oranges" (*Thinking* 187). By representing the two kinds of thought as normatively recognized abled persons—artists and accountants—Grandin rhetorically challenges, in normatively recognizable terms, the assumption that an epistemological difference in kind implies a value-differentiated hierarchy. This type of re-valuation paves the way for her assertion that "[a]s a person with autism, I do not feel offended when I compare myself to an animal. In some ways animals such as cattle or dogs have traits that are to be greatly admired" (*Thinking* 203). Asserting epistemological equity from another angle—and echoing Derrida's contention that the "possibilities or necessities [of trace, iterability and différance], without which there would be no language, *are themselves not only human*" (Derrida and Nancy 285)—Grandin suggests that the primacy of language is also undermined if we realize that forms of language exist beyond the human species barrier (*Translation* 272-76). Moreover, she notes that ethological studies suggest that "what's unique about language isn't the brilliant humans who invented it to communicate high-level abstract thoughts. What's unique about language is that the creatures who develop it are highly vulnerable to being eaten" (276). Clearly, Grandin is interested in promoting a kind of species humility for humans, whose epistemological hierarchies she has experienced as narrow and oppressive.

However, I would argue that the emphasis upon alterity over hierarchy tends to get lost in both Heidegger and Grandin's work, in part because of the cultural context I have already mentioned that interprets "nature" as being on the other side of the fence from "humanity," and that subsequently tends to figure species difference upon one, rather than innumerable, lines—a tendency which Derrida characterizes as our self-immunizing propensity to divide animals into two ontological camps, "Man with a capital *M* and Animal with a capital *A*" (*Animal* 29). In short, the subtlety of Heidegger and Grandin's assertions that other animals' relation to being is "different, not less,"[42] are ultimately recuperable as complicit with arguments for hierarchy and human exception, if the cultural common sense remains that there is a difference in kind between humans and a vast undifferentiated assemblage of "animals." Under such a forceful binary, human exception emerges as a default structure, even at times within the very work (Grandin and Heidegger's) that claims to undermine human exception by emphasizing mere alterity over hierarchical value. In other words, at least part of the problem is that the conceptual apparatus we seemingly always already use to sort beings—"Man with a capital *M* and Animal with a capital *A*"—structurally de-fangs such subtle calls for value-free difference.

I should note here that we need not wait for the cultural reception of Grandin's work to see the inauguration of this kind of de-fanging: as in

[42] This is the refrain in the recent HBO film *Temple Grandin*, repeated by the characters of Grandin and her mother in the effort to win recognition for the unique capacities of autistic epistemology. I wrote it here to describe Grandin's reappraisal of animal modes of thought before remembering that I picked up the phrase from watching this film.

Heidegger's work, the dogmatic effacement of Grandin's own call for respecting alterity comes first from her. With regard to animal epistemology, Grandin's work often resonates with Heidegger's assertion that animals do not have the mediated relationship that humans have with their environment; that animals exist in a relationship with stimuli of *Benommenheit*—translated as "captivation" by Agamben and "benumbedness" by Derrida. Animals are locked into relationships with certain elements of their environment (disinhibitors) that stimulate survival functions in a way that prevents the animal from achieving the critical distance necessary to apprehend the disinhibitor *as* a feature of its environment with which it has a reflexively perceivable relationship. Animals merely feed, for instance: their epistemology does not permit the apprehension of food *as* food, but merely locks the animal into a bodily reactive relationship with the presence of food objects. As Heidegger argues, "[b]eing open in captivation is an *essential possession* of the animal…This having is certainly *not a having of world*, but rather being held captive to the disinhibiting ring—it is a *having of that which disinhibits*" (269-70). What might it mean to "have" a disinhibitor, in a mode that is otherwise than apprehending one's disinhibitor as a Being? Is the relation Heidegger describes here not at least somewhat resonant with the zombie's unthinking relationship with the imperative to consume?

It is this moment in Heidegger's analysis that I think is perhaps most suggestive for Grandin's model of animal experience. Grandin proceeds in her work to understand animals on the premise that "[a]nimals are controlled by what

they see" (*Translation* 17). Hearkening back to the determinism of predator-prey relationships, Grandin argues that animals have evolved to rely heavily upon their visual perceptions of the world because "[*y*]*ou get food by being highly attuned to the visual environment*" (18). This predisposition leads to a situation in which animals not only have "hypervigilant senses" (*Thinking* 169), but also "have astonishing abilities to perceive things in the world. They have *extreme perception*. Their sensory worlds are so much richer than ours it's almost as if we're deaf and blind" (*Translation* 57). In other words, not only do animals pay extreme attention to stimuli, they consciously perceive more of it, in more detail. Indeed, Grandin emphasizes the fact that animals (and autistic people) perceive the world in terms of details, not generalized concepts: "[a]nimals and autistic people don't see their *ideas* of things; they see the actual things themselves. We see the details that make up the world, while normal people blur all those details together into their general concept of the world" (*Translation* 30). Here Grandin is setting forth a model of perception that claims a kind of unmediated sensory experience of the environment, yet in a mode of experiencing that is separate from forming an idea about what one is experiencing: could this be her version of what it is to "have" one's disinhibitor? At this point, it is also pertinent to note that Grandin posits a physiological reason for all of these differences between normal humans and animals, having to do with brain structures. She writes, "[a]nimals and autistic people see detail either because their frontal lobes are smaller and less developed (in the case of animals), or because they're not working as well as they

could be (in the case of autistic people)" (*Translation* 52). Taken together, these four factors—intensified attention to stimuli, extreme perception of stimuli, being detail-oriented, and difference in brain function—form the basis of Grandin's contention that animals "see everything and they react to everything" (*Translation* 26). In other words, they are locked into a reactive relationship with their disinhibitors; their environment locks them into a state of captivation.

Grandin concludes, "[a]utistic people and animals are different [from "normal" humans]: we can't filter stuff out" (*Translation* 67). In a sense, Grandin is drawing the same conclusion as Heidegger with regard to the difference in kind between the experiences of humans and animals (with the exception of autistic people, to which I will return in more detail). Yet the deterministic conclusion at hand is the product of at least four differences of degree, which I have just mentioned. According to Grandin herself, animals are simply more vigilant; see and hear more stimuli; appear to prioritize details in the environment; and have "smaller and less developed" frontal lobes, not necessarily non-existent ones. It is intriguing that Grandin writes in such stark terms about the difference in epistemology between animals and humans, in a manner that resembles the strict binary that persists in those infamous moments of Heidegger's work, yet arrives at such starkness by way of a route that so often admits discussion of *degrees* of difference within and among species. It appears that ultimately, Grandin is compelled to maintain some kind of investment in a singular, insuperable species barrier when making claims about what animals can experience. Moreover, it

seems that Grandin's leap from degree to kind signals a certain hasty effort to justify the aspect of factory farm pedagogy that maintains animals do not think beyond the moment-to-moment prey/zombie experiences that involve consuming and avoiding being consumed.

We see a similar situation in Grandin's theorization of "normal" human experience. Again, her model resonates somewhat with Heidegger's. In *Dasein* we have a model of human being that posits the human's ability to have a relationship with Being that is otherwise than captivation; it allows Being to manifest itself to the human *as* Being—the human is able to relate to the disconcealment of the Being in its environment in a mode of mediated distance from the Being through which it is revealed *as such*. However, this difference in relationship to world is predicated on Heidegger's articulation of a teleological species development that I have already mentioned: as Agamben outlines in his chapter of *The Open* on Heideggerian "profound boredom," in the possibility of *Dasein* there lies the potential for being locked into, or captivated by, the very structure of mediation that was to have constituted the freedom from animal captivation. Unlike the animal, it is possible for the human to "suspend and deactivate its relationship with the ring of its specific disinhibitors" (Agamben 68). Grandin describes "normal" human epistemology in terms similar to these. She writes:

> I always find it kind of funny that normal people are always saying autistic children "live in their own little world." When you work with animals for a while you start to realize you can say the same thing about normal people. There's a great big, beautiful world out there that a lot of normal folks are just

> barely taking in…Autistic people and animals are *seeing* a whole register of the visual world normal people can't, or don't. (*Translation* 24)

For Grandin, animals may be captivated by the environment, but normal humans are captivated by their environmental filters. Again, Grandin links this particular form of captivation to brain structures: while an animal's less-developed frontal lobes allow it to perceive a flood of stimuli, the developed frontal lobes of the normal human "get in the way" (*Translation* 52). They function to inhibit the experience of stimuli, limiting the flow of stimuli that reaches consciousness to the items that fit our higher-level schemas of epistemology: "a normal person's brain uses the detailed raw data of the world to form a generalized concept or schema, and that's what reaches consciousness…That's why normal people see only what they expect to see—because they can't *consciously experience* the raw data, only the schema their brains create out of the raw data" (*Translation* 65). Again, the outcome of this theorizing, for Grandin, is to suggest a deterministic difference in kind between human and animal epistemologies: "normal people can't *not* filter out distractions. A normal brain automatically filters out irrelevant details, whether you want it to or not" (67).

Yet Grandin makes this assertion on the heels of noting that studies on the cognitive phenomenon of "inattentional blindness" suggest that "sensory data comes in, your brain figures out what it is, and only then does it decide whether to tell you about it, depending on how important it is" (66). The examples of "important" details she points to that humans always seem to pick up include your

own name in the middle of a page of text, and the presence anywhere in the environment of "a cartoon smiley face" (66). These details suggest to me that the "schemas" we construct in our frontal lobes' filtering systems are fundamentally cultural; that is, built over time, through the accumulation of experiences. Consequently, both the definition of "irrelevant details" and the cognitive structure that eliminates them is possibly far more mutable than Grandin suggests. Again, it appears that Grandin's work contains a tension between her investment in a static binary of epistemology and the potential she articulates for a more diverse model of epistemological possibilities across the spectrum of species.

In this very tension, Grandin's work also resembles Heidegger's in that, as I have been outlining, the link furnished between different species' capacity to experience the world implicitly becomes a measure of relative deprivation. Perhaps ironically, the "measure of man" as Derrida characterizes this particular form of anthropocentrism, resurfaces in Grandin's work at a moment that could arguably be read as the moment that most ruptures the notion of human exception. Grandin makes the highly provocative claim that "[a]utism is a kind of way station on the road from animals to humans" (*Translation* 6), and reiterates this argument later in *Animals in Translation*: "[a]utistic people's frontal lobes almost never work as well as normal people's do, so our brain function ends up being somewhere in between human and animal. We use our animal brains more than normal people do, because we have to…*Autistic people are closer to animals than normal people are*" (57). There is clearly a narrative of almost teleological

development at work here, which she primarily situates in a model of brain evolution. Humans have three brain structures successively built one on top of the other according to the biological principle of conservation, in which structures that "work" are evolutionarily conserved: "[s]o you have your lizard brain to breathe and sleep, your dog brain to form wolf packs, and your human brain to write books about it" (*Translation* 54). Although she does not always privilege the "human brain," or frontal lobes—we saw earlier how she argues that they "get in the way" of a normal human's perception of rich detail—the fact remains that this model of the brain leads her to figure humans at the end of a "road" (three brains that work) that begins with nonhuman mammals (two brains that work) and includes autistics as a "way station" in the middle (two and a half brains that work, in Grandin's case). We can start to appreciate here how for both Grandin and Heidegger, the call for an appreciation of alterity becomes subsumed in implicit capitulations to more dogmatic models of animal experience.

Indeed, despite Grandin's important and valuable advocacy for the appreciation of alternative forms of epistemology, it is worth noting that her own biographical narrative, which forms an integral part of all her books and is now being widely disseminated in the HBO film *Temple Grandin*, is in some way a celebratory tracing of Grandin's development from what she herself seems to suggest is an awakening *from* her own captivation, *to* her captivation. Grandin traces her own gradual achievement of the traditional hallmarks of "becoming human," including language and symbolic thought; for instance, she places great

emphasis on what she calls her "door symbols": she describes the process by which she came to understand abstract concepts of life stages and personal relationships by walking through physical doors that she taught herself to view as symbols (*Thinking* 18). She notes that she "no longer use[s] actual doors or gates to symbolize each transition in my life" because eventually "a clear pattern emerged" (18). This narrative illustrates both the inspiring adaptability of brains of all kinds, and in this manner, it can potentially undermine the staticity of the epistemological hierarchy. Yet it also subtly reinforces a sense of humanist teleology that should not merely be ignored in assessing Grandin's animal pedagogy in terms of how it will likely be interpreted within broader cultural apparatuses of human and animal ontology.

In fact, Grandin's orientation to epistemology, which we have established is at least partly humanist both in its assumption of empirical certainty about animal minds and in its subtle reinforcement of animal epistemology as a relative mode of privation, has some deeply conservative consequences for the factory farm. Because in her model she is able to assume that cows, for instance, have a kind of immediate and non-conceptual relation to the world, she can rest in the assumption that improving animal welfare is the only necessary change in our factory farming operations. "What I have observed over the years and at many meat plants is that the things that frighten cattle usually have nothing to do with death. It is the little things that make them balk and refuse to move…" (*Thinking* 167). She reiterates this conclusion at several points, asserting, "I have learned not

to fear death and have accepted my own mortality. This has enabled me to look at slaughtering objectively and perceive it the way the cattle do" (94). Here, Grandin's un-problematized anthropomorphic identification with cows, coupled with her conclusions about their frontal lobes and abilities to form concepts, lead her quite comfortably to presume that animal epistemology has "nothing to do with death" except when the disinhibitors at hand immediately suggest it. Moreover, the achievement of utter identification with other animals implied by this conclusion effectively licenses Grandin to condone any treatment of cows and pigs to which she would submit herself. For instance, she concludes that her containment and slaughter systems must be ethically sound, because as she says in Errol Morris's *First Person* documentary series, "when I get old and die I'd much rather go to one of my meat packing plants than have a lion eat my guts out." Grandin thus effectively draws the epistemological closed loop around the factory farm once again. She writes:

> I have seen Holstein steers bellowing to penmates that were departing in a truck. The cattle that were left behind watched as their fat penmates walked up the ramp to get on the truck that would take them to Burgerland…The nice feedlot manager was worried that his cattle knew they were going to die. They had no way of knowing this; they just didn't like being separated from their buddies. (*Thinking* 195)

I cite this passage in full because it gives a clear sense of the epistemological presumptions and assumed certainties that are necessary in order to render this scene in such an untroubled manner. To be clear, I am not calling for the scene to be rendered with the kind of sentimental pathos that many would presume an urban vegan to feel, though admittedly I do feel something along those lines. I am

much more concerned that Grandin seems to have foreclosed any possibility of an orientation towards death in animals, in much the same way Heidegger infamously seems to have done. Moreover, we are not called upon to question the potential significance of either empirical observations of separation anxiety in a community of others—which may carry unheard-of meanings to those others, the point is, we don't know—nor are we called upon to question the vast socioeconomic apparatus that necessitates a "Burgerland." It seems that if we can rule out the immediate fear of death in the environment, then thanks to all of the features of the epistemological models I have just traced, we can consider our hands clean. Here, it is crucial to grasp how epistemological attenuation aids and abets the attenuation of consideration performed by the institution of the factory farm. Ultimately, the subtle re-inscription of both certainty and hierarchy in Grandin's account of animal experience helps efface innumerable ethical considerations at the site of the factory farm, even for people that care deeply about farm animals.

Fantasies of Sacrifice

If symbiosis and "worlding" are Grandin's favoured epistemological frameworks for explaining the human-animal relation on the factory farm, the logic of sacrifice is her preferred normative and prescriptive apparatus. Consequently, her claims about sacrifice are also the assertions whose pedagogical dimensions are the most explicit. In the "Stairway to Heaven"

chapter of *Thinking in Pictures*, she advocates for an overt performance of sacrificial ritual on the factory farm:

> I believe that the place where an animal dies is a sacred one. There is a need to bring ritual into the conventional slaughter plants and use it as a means to shape people's behavior. It would help prevent people from becoming numbed, callous, or cruel. The ritual could be something very simple, such as a moment of silence. In addition to developing better designs and making equipment to insure the humane treatment of all animals, that would be my contribution. No words. Just one pure moment of silence. I can picture it perfectly. (*Thinking* 239)

There is much to unpack here. In general, what are we to make of her faith that such a ritual will not merely improve animal welfare, but reinvent the factory farm as a nexus of revitalized ethical engagement? Here I attempt to make temporal sense of Grandin's uncanny faith in sacrifice—a mode of relation that I argue is at once anachronistic and the gesture *par excellence* for maintaining the status quo of intensive farming practices.

First, what might it mean, practically speaking, to implement what Grandin advocates here? Anyone familiar with the current *modus operandi* of factory farming and industrial slaughter would likely find Grandin's suggestion jarring, if not nonsensical. According to 2008 USDA data, American slaughterhouses process approximately 3.68 pigs per second ("Rate of Slaughter"), to give only one example of the imperatives of efficiency upon which the modern factory farm premises its operation—imperatives that Grandin is assuredly aware of. Accordingly, Grandin's desire to implement a moment of silence for each animal is extremely provocative. The inevitable slowing down of the production line that would result from implementing a ritual moment of

silence for every animal slaughtered is undoubtedly a desired side effect of the proposed ritual, in Grandin's mind, for attaining higher standards of animal welfare.[43] However, there is obviously more at stake in Grandin's statement. Presumably, Grandin is not advocating a *token* moment of silence, but one that is meaningful every single time; one that prevents the humans in the plant from becoming "numb and desensitized" to the deaths at hand (239). Endlessly repeated—or if not endlessly, at least several thousand times a day—we (are we not all implicated in the abattoir?) would re-experience the uncanny desire for connection with the dying animal, realized through sacrifice.

Even if we leave aside the practical feasibility of implementing such rituals at the modern intensive slaughterhouse, it remains necessary to point to the imperatives that would currently seem to hold more sway at the factory farm—the logics that would seem to rule out sacrifice, or that would seem to relegate it to the realm of anachronistic fantasy. I have already expanded upon these logics in the previous chapter, but must bring them up here, too, in order to render Grandin's logic of sacrifice in the fullest possible sense. Grandin's invocation of sacrifice may seem completely anachronistic—a reckless and fundamentally ill-fitting appeal to a pre-industrial conceptual apparatus—given our contemporary apprehension of power relations founded upon the supposedly inherent disposability of others. Henry Giroux, for instance, sums up what he calls "the

[43] Indeed, the speed at which animals are currently processed is a source of concern for virtually all animal welfare reformists and animal rights activists: the rates of injury and improper stunning attributed to pushing production to the limits of speed are uniformly reported in the literature to be extremely high.

new *biopolitics of disposability*": "the central commitment of the new hyper-neoliberalism is now organized around the best way to remove or make invisible those individuals and groups who are either seen as a drain or stand in the way of market freedoms, free trade, consumerism, and the neoconservative dream of an American empire" ("Reading" 175).

As I noted in the last chapter, Giroux is not alone in emphasizing the need to attend to emerging narratives of disposability. Likewise, in a post-twentieth-century, late capitalist milieu of such seemingly widespread utter disregard for life, there is growing wariness of using the term "sacrifice" to describe mass death, in a manner that is perhaps especially indebted to Holocaust studies and postcolonial theory. Zygmunt Bauman, for instance, recently urges us not to reduce all forms of modern mass murder to the rubric of sacrifice because they certainly do not all fit its description, which he cites from the *Oxford English Dictionary* as being "the 'surrender of something valued or desired for the sake of something having a higher or more pressing claim'" (*Does* 83). Along these lines, Bauman argues, "sacrifice" would not accommodate the seemingly commonplace modern logic behind the will to eliminate entire populations that have been deemed by the powerful to be *un*desirable and thus disposable. In a related register, Achille Mbembe is specific about the ontological mechanisms by which those in power devalue the lives of others in order to help justify their elimination in advance, or even to render such elimination a virtual non-issue. He describes "necropolitics," or a sovereign preoccupation with managing and perpetuating not

so much the life of a population ("biopolitics") but its death, and "the creation of *death-worlds*, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living dead*" (40). Confronted with the existence of such death-worlds—and we can all think of past and present potential sites—sacrifice as "the surrender of something valued or desired" doesn't seem to fit.

We might even become, as Grandin seems to be, somewhat nostalgic for sacrifice; desiring the reclaiming of a supposed (albeit hazily located) earlier age in which we valued the lives of others. Anachronistic fantasy or not, injecting sacrifice into the factory farm may seem like a positive step towards redeeming the space as one that might become less foreign to the ethical sphere, given the squalid, and as I argued in the last chapter, zombie-appropriate living conditions on modern farms and abattoirs. As I noted, these locations often do resemble an Mbembeian death-world: wholly mechanized, financialized, and industrialized locations for the disposal of animal lives. Certain factory farming conditions indeed seem geared more towards slowly bringing about an animal's death than keeping it alive in order to kill it—and I mean on a day-to-day basis, wholly apart from, and in advance of, the appointed moment of slaughter for each animal. Some animals have so little room to move, and live in conditions of such neglect from birth to death, that it seems extraordinary that continued existence until

slaughter would be possible.[44] It is this necropolitical aspect of factory farming that clearly horrifies Grandin; for instance, she writes in *Animals Make Us Human* that the conditions in unreformed chicken facilities "made me go Aaaaauuuuggghhhh. The welfare of the chickens I saw was horrible" (209). In *Thinking in Pictures*, she describes a scene at a now-defunct plant:

> [e]ach terrified animal was forced with an electric prod to run into a small stall which had a slick floor on a forty-five-degree angle. This caused the animal to slip and fall so that workers could attach the chain to its rear leg. As I watched this nightmare, I thought, "This should not be happening in a civilized society." In my diary I wrote, "If hell exists, I am in it." I vowed that I would replace the plant from hell with a kinder and gentler system. (178)

The "plant from hell" is not yet a properly sacrificial site, and Grandin undoubtedly thinks it would be more ethical, more respectful, if it were. In the context of an almost total *disregard* for animal life, sacrifice easily comes to signify an alternative that would imbue the scene with a much-needed *reverence* for animal life.

It is crucial, however, not to allow the logic of sacrifice to stand unexamined as the ostensibly honourable, redeeming alternative to the objectifying, instrumentalizing logic that underwrites the factory farm. I want to turn briefly to an allusion to sacrifice in Nicole Shukin's *Animal Capital*, in order to gesture to a problem that emerges in setting up such a binary. In the context of

[44] Consider, for instance, the phenomenon of "sudden death syndrome," in which factory farmed chickens are increasingly dying long before appointed slaughter due to the over-taxed hearts of chickens that have been intensively bred and engineered to have breasts that are disproportionately large (sometimes prohibiting the act of standing) and that grow at many times the "normal" rate (Foer 129-31).

contemporary abattoir practices, Shukin argues, the narrative of sacrifice is part of "the euphemistic discourse" that would universalize and dehistoricize what are "in fact historically, culturally, and politically contingent" practices of mechanized and industrialized killing (60). Shukin's overall point here is sound and crucial: sacrifice is almost always invoked in a euphemistic manner that universalizes and dehistoricizes killing (including, I will argue, in Grandin's case); and the modes of mechanized, industrialized slaughter endemic to farming operations today do call for detailed historical, cultural, and political analysis. What I would like to call attention to, however, is the rhetorical separation of the "euphemistic" notion of sacrifice from the material practices at hand. Are we sure that the concept of sacrifice has nothing to do with the instrumental rationality,[45] and increasingly the modes of disposability, that we find on the factory farm?

My intent here is to examine the unexpected compatibility between the notion of sacrifice and the neoliberal economic imperatives that underwrite the factory farm. Initial questions along these lines include: How euphemistic *is* sacrifice? And if it is so often discredited as merely providing an alibi for dehistoricization, is it not time to begin *rehistoricizing* the deployment of this dehistoricization?

[45] With the term "instrumental rationality" I refer quite generally to the concept as it is articulated and popularized by Adorno and Horkheimer in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, describing the modern form of rationality that privileges the most efficient means of bringing about a desired end, most often a capitalist-oriented end. I am aware that the term has been considerably developed since Adorno and Horkehimer's use of the term, notably by Jurgen Habermas, but for our purposes here I am using it rather schematically.

To begin answering the first question, it is important to remember that sacrifice, is, after all, an act of violence: one which certainly should not be considered as the last bastion of respect for others, no matter how utterly disrespectful the worst contemporary scenes of late capitalism are. As Kari Weil argues in one of the few articles yet published on the work of Temple Grandin, "[i]t must be remembered, however, that in all this breakdown of boundaries among human, machine, and animal, what remains unaffected is the sacrificial structure that violently reestablishes those boundaries at the moment they appear to be effaced. It is, of course, the animal alone who dies or at least perishes" (92). This fact alone suggests that sacrifice is not the euphemistic practice it is so often claimed to be, for not only is a being violently put to death, but also the human is always the active subject, and the animal always the objectified victim. Cary Wolfe, following Derrida—whose work on sacrifice I treat more directly below—incisively calls this re-inscription of the human-animal divide "the juridical function of species difference in sacrificial violence" (*Animal Rites* 155). While sacrifice is, by definition, an act of conferring value upon animals, we cannot forget that it is a sovereign ascription of value that is conferred *in and through* the act of killing and consuming the animal. "Value" is itself historically contingent, of course. So, what kind of value are we talking about in the particular case of the contemporary factory farm?

Beginning to answer that question brings us closer to understanding how to rehistoricize Grandin's invocation of sacrifice—a rehistoricization made all the

more urgent by the fact that Grandin so uncritically adopts a dehistoricized relation to sacrificial practice; for instance, asserting that during her participation in Kosher slaughter on equipment she has designed to keep the animals calm, "[t]ime stood still, and I was totally, completely disconnected from reality" (*Thinking* 237). Significantly, she also compares slaughtering on her equipment to being "in a Zen meditational state" (237)—a comparison that, I argue, peculiarly yet effectively reiterates sacrifice as dehistoricized practice both by evoking Orientalist tropes of the "timeless" exotic, and by cavalierly substituting the Jewish tradition of slaughter with an entirely heterogenous mode of the sacred, at the moment of the animal's death. At any rate, getting back to the task of pinning down the particular kind of animal value at stake in Grandin's account, I argue that the sacrificial value Grandin injects into the zombie scene of the modern slaughterhouse has primarily to do with elevating and realizing human-hood, not animal-hood. As Grandin's own statements on sacrifice attest, the value conferred upon the animal in an act of sacrifice is immediately appropriated and instrumentalized in the service of propping up a vision of humanity that not only reinforces humans as the ultimate masterful predators and subjects, but that also resonates and works in total harmony with the similarly humanity-serving value conferred upon the factory farmed animal by the late capitalist system—that is, the animal figured as both commodified and financialized value. In other words, the form of connection with other animals that is realized in sacrifice does not interfere in the least with the process of deeming the animal to be a being that

lives only to consume, and whose value consists in its enabling our intensified cycle of productive consumption to continue. In both zombie pedagogy and the rubric of sacrifice, in fact, the human kills and consumes the animal in the effort to immunize humanity, or to strengthen and shield the human as much as possible against having to face the same fate we inflict upon the weaker animal. Sacrifice, then, becomes discernable as a seamless complement to the financial and biopolitical values assigned to the animal, rather than as a genuinely redemptive alternative to such logics.

In making this kind of argument about sacrifice, Derrida's late work on animals is especially illuminating. As I will explore in more detail in the next chapter, for Derrida, sacrifice plays an ongoing and constitutive role in humanity's definition of itself: sacrifice reinforces a schema of the human subject that "implies carnivorous virility" and "installs the virile figure at the determinative center of the subject" (Derrida and Nancy 280). It is this subject-maintaining service performed by sacrifice, which constitutes, for Derrida, "a place left open…for a noncriminal putting to death" of animals (278). It is significant that in making such claims, Derrida is not content to take a dehistoricized, universalized vision of sacrifice at face value; instead, he argues that "[i]n our culture, carnivorous sacrifice is fundamental, dominant, regulated by the highest industrial technology…carnivorous sacrifice is essential to the structure of subjectivity…[and is] at the basis of our culture and our law"

("Force" 247).[46] Through his careful attention—in many texts, including *The Gift of Death* and *The Animal That Therefore I Am*—to the manifold implications of the founding sacrificial scenes of the Judeo-Christian tradition, Derrida argues that in the wake of the "double insistence upon nudity, fault, and default at the origin of human history and within sight or perspective of the animal" (*The Animal* 44), "what is proper to man, his subjugating superiority over the animal, his very becoming-subject, his historicity, his emergence out of nature, his sociality, his access to knowledge and technics, all that, everything (in a nonfinite number of predicates) that is proper to man would derive from this originary fault…" (45). In this view, the application of instrumental rationality to our relationship with animals throughout the modern period is less a break with archaic logics that are more explicitly sacrificial, than an *intensification* and *amplification* of a sacrificial logic that founds and buttresses human subjectivity. Humanity does nothing less than coalesce around and through the sacrificial operation, figured as "need, desire, authorization, the justification of putting to

[46] Criticisms of Derrida's arguments about sacrifice often seem to originate from a position that maintains a stubborn separation between the concept of sacrifice and concepts of instrumental rationality—a common separation that I have already discussed. For instance, in a recent issue of *Configurations*, Jonathan Burt argues that "the formative, ritual, and, above all, visible elements of the act of sacrifice that give rise to the reinforcement of social and cultural identities, as well as linkages of living beings and victims to divinities and mythologies, have no place in the contemporary scenes of killing in science, industry, and agriculture" (161). Consequently, Burt interprets Derrida's attention to sacrifice vis-à-vis factory farming as indicative of "Derrida's failure to speculate *inside* of technology's role in human-animal relations" (162). However, if we follow Derrida's line of argument carefully, it is clear that only a radical conceptual quarantine of the notion of sacrifice from contemporary farming practices would enable such a reading, given that Derrida continually emphasizes sacrifice's role in the formation of an historicized post-Enlightenment subject that is always already grappling with imperatives of instrumental rationality, and in the passage that is the director to this footnote, *explicitly* situates sacrifice within technological and industrial operations.

death, putting to death as denegation of murder. The putting to death of the animal, says this denegation, is not a murder. I would link this denegation to the violent institution of the 'who' as subject" (Derrida and Nancy 283). Here we can also see why it proves so difficult to conceive of reconfiguring the difference between humans and animals according to a *steadfastly single* line, throughout the previous section of this chapter and elsewhere: so much of who we conceive ourselves to be depends upon the maintenance of that line.

We can also begin to see how the sacrificial conceptual models Grandin prescribes do not merely preserve the status quo of human-animal relations on the factory farm, but almost carry a kind of manic reactionary flavour. Juxtaposed with her lengthy accounts of the importance of implementing animal welfare standards from the animal's point of view, her exclusive focus upon the potential benefits of sacrificial ritual for the human workers in the passage I cited at the outset—that it could be "a means to shape people's behavior" because it "would help prevent people from becoming numbed, callous, or cruel"—jarringly echoes the Kantian "indirect" justification for animal welfare, which is cited repeatedly in animality literature as the quintessential short-sighted anthropocentric view on animal welfare.[47] Even more curiously, she asserts—seemingly out of nowhere, like many of her assertions about sacrifice and the sacred—that "man believes in heaven, hell, or reincarnation because the idea that after the cattle walk into the slaughterhouse it is all over forever is too horrible to conceive. Like the concept

[47] Tom Regan deals extensively with this aspect of Kant's work in *The Case for Animal Rights*, but references to it abound in innumerable other books on animal ethics and rights.

of infinity, it is too ego-shattering for people to endure" (*Thinking* 227). A literal reading of the syntax here yields a telling ambiguity: while it is possible that she is making some kind of reference to a heaven for cattle, her subsequent emphasis upon the shattering of human egos suggests that her frame of reference remains within an exclusively human register of Christianity and belief. If she *is* writing only of a human afterlife—it remains ambiguous, but there is little evidence to suggest otherwise—why bring up the cattle at all? It appears to be that the deaths of the cattle have to do, intimately, with human concepts of humanity's place in the cosmos. This reading of Grandin's assertion tracks Derrida's arguments about sacrifice perfectly: the cattle's deaths are productive not only of meat, but of human meaning and the meaning of humanity. The specter of the cattle's deaths implying that "it is all over forever" is successfully sublimated into human notions of human afterlife and the human ego. Perhaps it is this conclusion about sacrifice that inspires Grandin to record her dream that the Swift processing plant—touching the walls of which she elsewhere compares to "touching the sacred altar" (227)—is only a slaughterhouse on the first of six stories; that after finding a secret elevator, the "upper levels consisted of beautiful museums and libraries that contained much of the world's culture" (228). The symbolic framework of human-serving sacrifice here finds a literal expression in Grandin's dream: human culture is literally founded on the backs of animals. As if the rendering is not strange enough, Grandin delivers the ultimate justification of sacrificial slaughter in her abrupt assertion that "there is one thing that completely

separates people from animals. It is not language or war or toolmaking; it is long-term altruism" (234). It becomes clear that she means a form of altruism that has to do with preserving scientific knowledge for future generations, even if doing so requires self-sacrifice. The act of sacrifice thus doubly underwrites human subjectivity and culture: in protecting the vast library that is literally built on the originary sacrifice of animals in the slaughterhouse, symbolic self-sacrifice on the part of humans both provides extra insurance and immunity for the library of humanity, and draws the single line between humans and animals more indelibly than ever before.

Ultimately, it appears that of the three conceptual apparatuses for explaining the factory farm at stake here, while sacrifice might seem to be the most appealing departure from the extant logics of the farm, albeit anachronistic, in fact it is neither anachronistic nor a departure. If sacrifice endows the animal with value only in order to immediately re-appropriate that value for human ends, I would suggest that it carries more potential to work in tandem with the neoliberal economic imperative of "accumulation through dispossession"[48] that is in effect at the factory farm, than it does to ethically "save" the animals from such an operation. In other words, the appeal to sacrifice here resonates with Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller's assertion in the introduction to their recent anthology on ecocriticism: "[w]ithin this toxic atmosphere operate the dual long-term motives of an *economic ideology* that exploits and discards the nonhumans

[48] I get this term from David Harvey's description of neoliberal logic in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.*

along with the majority of the humans, and the *spiritual ideologies* that legitimate it by collusion or default" (4). Ultimately, then, sacrifice ultimately helps facilitate the conservative retrenchment of a hierarchical division between humans and other animals in a manner that both perpetuates the presumed difference in kind between human and animal "worlds," and that works to foreclose potentially transformative iterations of symbiotic paradigms. None of the three paradigms I have discussed through Grandin's work is a perfect fit for describing, and reading otherwise, the factory farm. Grandin's work, however, illustrates how each of these models may be stretched and combined with each other in order to render an explanation for the factory farm that insists, however fitfully, that the site can be rendered compatible with a supposedly capacious view of animal life.

Conclusion: Hope in Failed Narratives

As I argued at the outset of this chapter, even justificatory narratives for the factory farm gesture to our cultural desire to subscribe to something other than the neoliberal biopolitics of factory farm pedagogy. Lawrence Grossberg argues that while those in power may seek "a new modernity in which there can only be one kind of value, market value; one kind of success, profit; one kind of existence, commodities; and one kind of social relationship, markets" (264), he "see[s] little evidence that, as a nation, Americans are ready to accept profit as the only 'good' and markets as the source of the meaning of our lives" (264). Like Grossberg, I am careful not to argue here that the attenuated aims of neoliberalism are entirely

coextensive with our current ethical and political values. Grandin's struggle to locate ways to describe the factory farm—ways that often anxiously and inadequately seek to situate the farm in non-economic logics, narratives, and models for interpreting human and animal lives—indicate that while we may be discouraged from generating ideals and languages not oriented exclusively to the profit motive, we are not finally comfortable with that lack of language, that lack of ideals. Even in a deeply anti-intellectual cultural climate, in other words, there is the desire for the kind of wide-ranging intellectual consideration that is the hallmark of a humanities education. In the next chapter, I will turn to one of several cultural discourses that seek not to justify the factory farm, but to make a world without it: vegetarian discourse. Does this form of cultural pedagogy succeed in fostering the critical thought and possibilities for both human and animal life that factory farm pedagogy insists are unavailable, and that Grandin's pedagogy anxiously suggests are being sufficiently addressed on the factory farm in the wake of her reforms? If not, how might we open the way for such possibilities to flourish?

Chapter Three: Critical Animal Pedagogy and Critical Veganisms

> Oh, you mean baketivism? I just made that word up. I think that activism isn't what you decide to do but how it affects people. So if someone says, I'm going to become an activist! I'm going to stand on a street corner and preach about veganism! And then they go ahead and do that but no one listens and no one becomes vegan, then is that activism? On the other hand, maybe there's a girl in the middle of nowhere who loves animals and decided to bake vegan. And then people taste her cupcakes and are like "What the hell, I'll go vegan, too." Obviously I think the latter is more effective, but I guess people might not see it as activism. (Moskowitz qtd. in Castoria)

The epigraph above is drawn from a *VegNews* interview with vegan cookbook author Isa Chandra Moskowitz, in which she intervenes in a longstanding debate in the vegan community about how to effectively communicate with others about the links between eating and the exploitation of other animals. What is at stake in such a debate? Moskowitz's explicit rationale for "baketivism" coheres around two key questions that animate this final chapter: first, what constitutes meaningful resistance to the current iteration of power that is modeled so forcefully at the site of the factory farm? Second, how might we frame such resistance in pedagogical terms, taking seriously the extent to which both the factory farm and our various responses to it rely upon a constitutively pedagogical relation? In the last chapter, I explored common conceptual frameworks through which we tend to explain the factory farm to each other. These frameworks produce narratives that attempt—and often fail—to articulate an alternative rendering of the zombie pedagogy of the factory farm, as a means of maintaining the assurance of our own humaneness under extant farming practices. Such accounts, I concluded, tend to re-inscribe the operating tenets of neoliberal

biopolitics, even as they rhetorically gesture beyond such premises. Here, I turn to discourses that explicitly resist and attempt to repudiate the lessons about life modeled by the factory farm; specifically, I examine discourses of veganism and vegetarianism.[49] While cultural discussions of vegetarianism and veganism do not represent the only iterations of cultural resistance to factory farming—for instance, the recent resurgence of small-scale, artisanal farming is worthy of note—I narrow my focus in this way in order to illustrate in the clearest fashion possible both the reach and the necessary negotiation of factory farm pedagogy. Even an attempt to reject all animal husbandry, in other words, must thoroughly grapple with the lessons of the factory farm. It is this fact that underscores the dual concerns of this chapter: pedagogy and resistance. To what extent do current pedagogies of vegetarianism and veganism rely upon the same definitions of human subjectivity and animal life that are articulated by the factory farm? What potentially remains of factory farming logic—neoliberal disposability, for instance; or the maintenance of a human subject founded upon a masterful immunization against others—in existing vegetarian efforts to resist the factory farm? Ultimately, how might we begin to resist the factory farm's assertions about life, by pedagogically communicating new and different frameworks for apprehending life, human and otherwise? In other words, what are the potential

[49] "Vegetarianism" usually refers to a practice of refraining from eating meat, while "veganism" usually refers to the practice of refraining from consuming any animal products. I do not see these concepts as necessarily diametrically opposed in the ways their logics are popularly understood, which is why they are used more or less interchangeably at this point in the chapter. Later in the chapter, I will make some suggestions for a new critical distinction that roughly falls between a certain "vegetarianism" and a certain "veganism," but for the purposes of talking about the current popular concepts of these practices, I am softening the distinction.

futures for what I will call critical veganisms, and for a critical animal pedagogy to come?

Articulating even provisional answers to such questions requires a clear, critical investigation of the concept of resistance. In any biopolitical context, and certainly in the neoliberal biopolitical frame that currently structures our society, what does resistance look like, and how might it work? After all, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri suggest, "[t]he ultimate core of biopolitical production…is not the production of objects for subjects, as commodity production is often understood, but the production of subjectivity itself" (x). In other words, as I outlined in the first chapter with regard to the biopolitical constitution of life more generally, a constitutive feature of biopolitical power relations is that there is no pure space for human life to dwell beyond the operation of biopolitics: human subjectivity itself is forged within the field of power. If biopolitics is in fact a primary mode of current power relations—and the foregoing analysis in this thesis strongly suggests that it is such—what then happens to notions of resistance, which so often seem conceptually to rely upon the actions of an embodied agency that operates from a location "outside" the unjust power relationships that we are trying to resist? In responding to this question, it is useful to return to Jeffrey Nealon's analysis of power, specifically its functioning through intensification. While the structure of the factory farm might performatively assert that its expression of domination is grounded in an *a priori* and permanent possession of totalized power over animals, Nealon's

reading of Foucault suggests that it may be more productive to read all expressions of biopower as more or less intense organizations of force. In this vein, Nealon gives an account of resistance that deals directly with the biopolitical problem of being unable to locate a pure space outside of power (in fact, as I discuss below, the very effort to locate this kind of pure space from which to mount a resistance often becomes a biopolitical problem in itself). Nealon suggests that resistance to any given intensification of power is available in a countervailing effort to "extend, broaden, or saturate certain effects within a given field, while trying to constrict, limit, or downplay other effects" (95). Consequently, he argues, the "question or problem is not so much *uncovering* resistance, as it is a question of 'tuning' it—finding channels, concepts, or practices that can link up and thereby intensify transversal struggles into larger, collective but discontinuous movements" (106). Here, the notion that we are constituted by power is not an assertion of our impotence to act, but rather the opposite: it can serve as "precisely an 'optimistic' premise, as it spreads resistance across the fields of everyday life and its contacts with power, rather than scarifying or sanctifying it in life-and-death clashes" (101). Of course, this Foucaultian account of the functioning of power and resistance comprises less "the truth" about power than it does a pedagogical model of power, with concrete effects—in the same way that the factory farm articulates a pedagogy of life that is at once a "mere" truth claim and a lesson that wreaks profoundly material consequences. Consequently, we arrive at two workable conclusions about

resistance: first, in the neoliberal biopolitical world we inhabit, resistance will have to concern itself fundamentally with pedagogical practices. Second, from this perspective, it becomes easier to see how the attempt to locate for resistance a pure position outside power is potentially not only a distraction from recognizing the promising resources for resistance we do have at our disposal, but also perhaps reiterates the immunizing pedagogy that resisters of the factory farm undoubtedly wish to "de-intensify."

Moskowitz already signals that pedagogy is central to a certain rendering of vegan resistance in her contention that activism should be assessed based on its effects on others; or more specifically, its capacity to open a space in and with the other, in which new, shared knowledges might flourish. Certainly, I am already speaking of vegetarian discourses in a way that draws on the theoretical archive of critical pedagogy: what is the extent to which a public discourse on vegetarianism, as a mode of resistance to the factory farm, can unfold or fail to unfold in a manner that takes up Paulo Freire's suggestion that "to teach is not *to transfer knowledge* but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge" (30)? In other words, I share critical pedagogy's commitment to frame public pedagogy—in this case, on vegetarianism—as potentially being a dialogue about justice; an intervention that, at its best, would open up possibilities for engaging human and nonhuman others differently on and through the act of consumption, possibilities that would seem to be foreclosed by the lessons of the

over-determined and over-determining factory farm and its accompanying food production and distribution system.

Yet it may initially seem peculiar or counterproductive to posit vegetarianism as a possible locus of a critical pedagogical project of resistance. As I have been tracing throughout this thesis, we live in a world that has been deeply shaped by neoliberal imperatives, including the creation of a dominant form of public pedagogy that as Henry Giroux argues, aims "to produce competitive, self-interested individuals vying for their own material and ideological gain," and that "with its narrow and imposed schemes of classification and limited modes of identification uses the educational force of the culture to negate the basic conditions for critical agency" (*Border* 4, 5). In other words, public pedagogy has come to reiterate many of the logics of economic neoliberalism, atomizing and depoliticizing the public sphere. Along these lines, Zygmunt Bauman observes that the contemporary public sphere no longer offers "the prospect of collective means to be collectively used in handling/solving individual problems," and has instead, become a kind of forum for the mere aggregated voicing of "an agglomeration of private troubles, worries, and problems" (*In Search* 65). Subsequently, it has become widely accepted in cultural studies that this emptying of the public sphere seems to formally reduce the exercise of democracy to the exercise of individualized consumer choice—a rendering that represents a percolated manifestation of the more extreme pedagogical assertion on the factory farm, that life is entirely and literally

reducible to zombie-like consumption. How does it make sense to pose vegetarianism as a mode of resistance to this understanding of the public sphere, when vegetarianism is at least partly *premised* upon an attention to individualized consumption, and is so often framed as the most personal of choices? Moreover, in a public climate which, as Giroux argues, takes so easily to "absurdly plunging massive systemic abuse into the shallow waters of individual character" (*Politics After* 7), is it not also risky to count on the potential of vegetarianism as a project of critical pedagogy, when it is so easy to interpret and take up vegetarian practice in terms of individualized moral fitness?

My contention in this chapter is that yes, vegetarianism is a risky basis for a critical resistance to the factory farm—but that a certain vegetarianism-to-come is potentially too worth the gamble to be abandoned. Admittedly, the inherently individualized site of eating renders discourses on food as quite readily complicit with a neoliberal rubric of "lifestyle choices," democratic in name only, that have been erased of any reference to the human and non-human labour, environmental costs, and ethical problems that underwrite all food items. Meanwhile, as each of these factors is effaced in the popular understanding of what it means to eat, each has also become increasingly exploited and exploitable behind the scenes of a food production system that, according again to neoliberal imperatives, concentrates profit at the "middle"—at the hinge occupied by immense food production and distribution corporations, which cede little power and choice to

the people on either end of the system.[50] One end remains largely comprised of a low-paid, globalized workforce that have been co-opted into producing vast monoculture crops with generally only short-term environmental viability; the other end, in North America at least, makes its "choices" in a food landscape dominated, as Michael Pollan argues in *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, by heavily-processed corn and soy products, a category that oddly-but-factually includes factory-farmed animals. Additionally, the degree of "choice" is differentially distributed according to various registers of structural disadvantage: recent analyses of "food deserts"—largely inner city areas without access to supermarkets, only to fast food outlets and convenience stores—are just one indication of this deep systemic problem.[51] Overall, it is becoming increasingly clear that as food writer Mark Bittman recently observed in the *New York Times*, "[i]t would be hard to devise a more wasteful, damaging, unsustainable system." Again, then, where would a revitalized discourse on vegetarianism fit into this matrix of problems?

I insist that vegetarianism is worth the gamble as a critical form of cultural pedagogy in part *because* it is a discourse that holds consumption as central. While it is certainly possible, and even perhaps common, to subsume this kind of attention under the neoliberal sign of individualized consumer choice and a

[50] My brief summing-up of the food system here is drawn from many sources I have read over the years, with special thanks to Raj Patel's *Stuffed and Starved*, Brian Brett's *Trauma Farm*, Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Jonathan Safran Foer's *Eating Animals*, and Peter Pringle's *Food, Inc.*
[51] The *New York Times* has been periodically, if somewhat tangentially, covering issues related to "food deserts." See, for instance, "Walgreens Tackles 'Food Deserts," by Rob Walker, published online November 12, 2010.

certain privileged preoccupation with bodily purity and health, my contention is that vegetarianism and veganism are ultimately not reducible to this neoliberal interpretation: there are many possible kinds and expressions of vegetarianism, just as there are many different iterations of feminism, or of activism. There are undoubtedly "vegetarian zombies," using consumption as a means of immunizing themselves against the need to think, yet just as indisputably, there are vegetarian subjects for whom consumption acts as a *call* to thought, and to the proliferation, not winnowing, of critical considerations of life. As I will explore below, in taking the act of consumption as an object of rigorous critique, a certain critical version of veganism potentially aids our continued interrogation of the foundations of the humanist subject that have made neoliberal modes of relating to the world possible and legitimate in the first place. Moreover, as part of a philosophical commitment to the ongoing deconstruction of the human, critical veganism potentially also provides us with a way to carry out this critique through a pedagogical process "on the ground," as it were, helping us reframe and refigure our lived, embodied roles in structures large and small—not merely through the act of purchasing one product over another, which we can agree represents a particularly impoverished attempt at resistance on its own, but also through a collective critical exploration of the ways that each of us might participate in forging an alternative relationship between humans and others, both human and non-human.

In the first section of the chapter, I lay the groundwork for my articulation of the critical possibilities of vegan cultural pedagogy, by exploring the insights on the human-animal relationship that the burgeoning field of critical animal studies brings to bear on such a project. In what ways does the project of deconstructing the humanist subject help us refigure our relationship to other animals, in a manner that carries both material and conceptual implications? The next section of the chapter takes up some current cultural pedagogical representations of vegetarianism that appear to re-inscribe some of the more dogmatic assumptions about the human-animal relationship that critical animal studies is so concerned with deconstructing—but that also demonstrate some of the considerable obstacles confronting such a project. In the final section, I point to some alternative ways of conceiving a critical veganism, framing the practice as a continual ethical *effort* to reckon with others, rather than as the *achievement* of a pure and masterful form of human subjectivity.

Critical Animal Studies and Vegetarianism: Lest We Presume

"But I do not believe in absolute 'vegetarianism,'" Jacques Derrida tells Elisabeth Roudinesco, "nor in the ethical purity of its intentions" (67). Derrida's few brief comments on vegetarianism—this one being perhaps his most forceful statement on the topic—form a small portion of his substantial corpus of work directly about animals that he focused upon in the last few years of his life, work which he argued was only bringing into relief a philosophical interest he had

followed throughout his entire oeuvre (*Animal* 35-38). For reasons I will elaborate below, Derrida is convinced that "absolute 'vegetarianism'" is not consistent with the ethical project he calls elsewhere "eating well," or "determining the best, most respectful, most grateful, and also most giving way of relating to the other and relating the other to the self" (Derrida and Nancy 281-82). Most vegetarians and vegans would undoubtedly assert that their dietary practices are the direct result of striving to do exactly what Derrida describes as eating well, so what explains the disjuncture? More broadly speaking, why are so many in animal studies—specifically, the more or less "posthumanist" threads of critical animal studies I am primarily concerned with, which are premised upon a commitment to deconstructing the metaphysical humanist subject—reticent to address the topic of vegetarianism at all? To be sure, there are threads in the large, interdisciplinary field of "animal studies" that are committed to vegetarian theory, but in the quarters of the field that I am most interested in as a potential spawning ground of critical animal pedagogy and critical vegan critique, work that robustly theorizes vegetarianism remains relatively scant. Here, I want to explore the reasons for such sparing treatment of vegetarianism in this critically compelling corner of the field, and point to some of the work being done there that seems ripe for engagement with the vegetarian question, including in Derrida's own work.

First, in general, what is the current cultural and theoretical climate for vegetarian theory? Animal studies finds itself negotiating between several inextricable yet perhaps radically heterogenous contexts. The first obstacle is that

this interdisciplinary field is faced with the difficulty of holding together a critical conversation among vastly different approaches to the animal question, such as those of the social sciences, including socio-biology and evolutionary psychology; the various sciences; an array of activist movements; critical theory; cultural studies; and philosophy, both "analytic" and "continental." With regard to philosophy, for instance, the field must negotiate the fact that the seminal texts of modern animal ethics philosophy, Peter Singer's utilitarian treatise *Animal Liberation* (1975) and Tom Regan's *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983), rely heavily upon an un-deconstructed humanist subject as the model for extending consideration to other animals that are supposedly sufficiently similar to humans to warrant such consideration—"mentally normal mammals of a year or more" (78), according to Regan's parsimonious assertion. In the shadow of this legacy for animal ethics philosophy that is so often presumed to be definitive, the more continentally inflected threads of animal theory must continually pose and re-pose the problems with human-based recognition as a foundation for ethics. Yet beyond intra-field conflict, the critical threads of the field must also continue treading water in a culture that is grappling with its own immunitary responses to both factory farm pedagogy and the over-determined framing of such issues by organizations like PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals)—immunitary responses that are only compounded by the growing cultural suspicion of the academic humanities and their role in culture.[52] Moreover, critical

[52] See, for instance, Susan Searls Giroux's *Between Race and Reason: Violence, Intellectual*

animal studies must find footing in the newly emerging discourse of "ethical omnivorism" that currently appears to dominate the field of popular cultural responses to the unabated, vast material and economic operation of the factory farm.[53] Some of the tension in theorizing vegetarianism, and any reluctance to doing so, surely stems from the situation of critical animal studies at this busy discursive intersection.

In other words, it is my sense that, unfortunately, "vegetarianism" has become a watchword of sorts for the kind of uncritical humanism beyond which the critical wing of animal studies is trying to work. The generally posthumanist iteration of critical animal studies must forge a space of critique and transformation between what can feel like a rock and a hard place, each involving an over-determined, insufficiently deconstructed concept of the humanist subject, and respectively constituted by animal rights discourse "below" and the epistemic violence of the institutionalized factory farm "above." Moreover, in the "lateral" dimension of the map I am drawing here, the posthumanist sub-field of animal studies I am interested in must defend a space of critique between a popular culture that is currently exploring the extent to which ethical eating is not

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Responsibility, the University to Come, and its conclusion that "humanistic inquiry is increasingly threatened with extinction, as has apparently been the case for nearly a century. I've even suggested that for many—those who have capitulated to one or another of the many forms of contemporary anti-intellectualism—thinking itself, allowing emotion to be tempered by patient and careful thought, has become an act of irreverence, and is even considered indecent" (240).

[53] Here I am primarily referring to popular writing on ethical, omnivorous food choices by writers like Pollan and Bittman, but I should also note that this body of work, which has increasingly helped yield a popular demand, in partial resistance to the factory farm, that we should "know where our food comes from," has been appropriated by innumerable "big brand" food corporations, like Hellmann's Mayonnaise, McCain Foods, and Wendy's Restaurants, all of which (and many more) currently run television commercials extolling the virtues of their "all-natural" and meticulously-sourced ingredients.

reducible to animal rights—Pollan and Temple Grandin's work are at the forefront here—and a critical commitment, drawing heavily on the work of Derrida and other "continental" philosophers, that emphasizes the need to excavate, not retrench, the metaphysical human subject. Yet in the effort to carve out a space for the sustained critique of humanism, I argue that the field of posthumanist animal studies has somewhat immunized itself, in the paradigmatically humanist fashion, against both the impinging, often uncritically reiterative discourses of humanism from which it attempts to differentiate itself, and thus also against too much thought about the critical potential of vegetarianism. As a result, there is a sense in which the potentially productive inter-discursive tension of the field's theoretical location results in a tendency to throw out the baby of revitalized vegetarian subjectivity theory with the bathwater of another discourse's perceived dogma. Conversely, I assert that the location of critical animal studies at a particularly messy discursive intersection could provide as many productive opportunities for re-theorizing vegetarianism in a manner consistent with the praxis of critical pedagogy and of posthumanist critique, as it currently provides seeming allergies to that project.

Developing this assertion, though, requires a thorough and generous return to Derrida's remarks on vegetarianism, and their relationship to his broader interventions on the subject of ethics. I want to signal two main characteristics of a certain "absolute" version of vegetarianism that would clash with Derrida's ethical commitments. First, Derrida is wary of ethical models that re-enact—

uncritically and unconsciously, emphasizing different objects of sacrifice—the violent, sacrificial founding or achievement of what he calls the "virile," "carnophallogocentric" humanist subject. Second, following Emmanuel Levinas, and in a certain fellowship with other mostly-European philosophers reckoning with the failure of extant ethical models in the twentieth-century context of the Shoah and other atrocities, Derrida is committed in his work to emphasizing the constitutive failure of ethical frameworks that are based wholly in the exclusive extension of generosity and rights to those whom one recognizes as worthy of consideration. "Absolute" vegetarianism, Derrida implies, is potentially indictable on both counts.

Yet what is "absolute" vegetarianism in the first place? I suggest that we can gain a better sense of what Derrida means by this term by revisiting his work on the sacrificial foundations of the humanist subject, which I have already briefly discussed with reference to Grandin's work. The field of critical theory, of course, continually attempts to identify the processes by which the humanist subject, since at least the Enlightenment, constitutes itself according to processes of identification with dominant aspects of all the well-known dualisms that inhere in the definition of the metaphysical, presumably self-sufficient and self-contained human subject. In his later work on animals, Derrida emphasizes that a primary mechanism of this self-constituting process operates through the immunizing logic of sacrifice: the human subject assumes a constitutive mastery over the self and others, primarily in the act of expunging, negating, and excluding the animal

other. Moreover, this effort to immunize and thus strengthen the subject consists of a specifically "carnivorous virility" (Derrida and Nancy 280): at its most effective, and as in any good immunization, its assumption of immunized mastery involves not only a killing, but also a consumption of the other in a subject-fortifying mode of "conception-appropriation-assimilation of the other" (281). Killing and eating the animal, in other words, allows the human subject to appropriate to himself[54] both a constitutive sense of mastery, and a violent symbolic separation from the necessity for an ethical engagement with the animal other—or indeed, with anyone or anything we might relegate to the status of "animal other." The human subject as it is presently understood, then, is inherently a "carnophallogocentric" subject, founded on a structure of "the (symbolic or real) experience of the 'eat-speak-interiorize'" (281). Consequently, Derrida asserts, "carnivorous sacrifice is essential to the structure of subjectivity…[it is] at the basis of our culture and our law" ("Force" 247), and the conceptual and material institution of sacrifice "installs the virile figure at the determinative center of the subject" (Derrida and Nancy 280). It is important to note here, too, that Derrida is invoking an inherently melancholic apparatus of eating and subject-formation: the loss of connection to others is repudiated through a melancholic replacement of that which is lost, by the substituted achievement of a subject made whole through virile mastery over others.

[54] As Derrida would agree here, given the masculine symbolism of this kind of subject constitution, the masculine pronoun remains relevant nomenclature. See Derrida and Nancy pg. 281.

Lest we still fail to apprehend the depths of the sacrificial structure of subjectivity, Derrida asserts that even the most heretofore radical philosophical critiques of the metaphysical subject, those of Heidegger and Levinas, for instance, "nonetheless remain profound humanisms *to the extent that they do not sacrifice sacrifice*" (279): they maintain a structure of human subjectivity founded upon a logic of sacrifice, in that they retain an ethical framework that poses the human subject only in relation to a knowable human other, thus leaving a still-constitutive opening "for a noncriminal putting to death" of the animal (278). Consequently, Derrida is suggesting, only the most radical deconstructive work is equal to the task of grasping, and acting ethically in response to, a logic of sacrifice that is so profound, so encompassing, so constitutive. The imperative to sacrifice sacrifice, after all, radically pushes the posthumanist project to the very limits of its intelligibility. It is an aporetic imperative that calls upon the subject to make the impossible, yet necessary decisions that follow upon apprehending our constitutive state of being-with-others—decisions that would forgo the self-immunization wrought in sacrifice, without claiming the sacrificial payoff of having forgone sacrifice: thus taking, perhaps, the ultimate risk for the humanist subject.

It seems that Derrida is far from convinced that existing discourses of vegetarianism have grasped the extent of sacrificial logic. Vegetarians are not immune from sacrificial processes of self-constitution; instead, Derrida suggests, "vegetarians, too, partake of animals, even of men. They practice a different mode

of denegation" (Derrida and Nancy 282). This comment sheds further light on Derrida's remark about "absolute" vegetarianism, which reads in full: "But I do not believe in absolute 'vegetarianism,' nor in the ethical purity of its intentions—nor even that it is rigorously tenable, without a compromise or without a symbolic substitution" (Derrida and Roudinesco 67). In other words, vegetarians cannot, in good faith, claim that they have exempted themselves from the violent sacrificial structure of subjectivity. For one thing, the most anyone can hope for is what Derrida calls elsewhere a "lesser violence"—that is, there is never a guarantee that one is not harming another; there is never absolute freedom from the necessity to "compromise." Furthermore, Derrida asserts that there is potentially always a "symbolic substitution" in the act of vegetarianism: the notion that vegetarians "partake of animals, even of men" perhaps suggests that vegetarians merely choose another object to externalize in the name of self-constitution. "It is not enough to stop eating meat in order to become a non-carnivore," Derrida argues; "[t]he unconscious carnivorous process has many other resources, and I do not believe in the existence of the non-carnivore in general" (Derrida and Roudinesco 68). In other words, a vegetarian's renunciation of the sacrificial symbol and material *par excellence*—meat—does not mean that the vegetarian has "sacrificed sacrifice," since to truly do so, one would have to risk overturning everything that makes the human subject what it currently is. Overall, then, and to cast Derrida's intervention on vegetarianism in terms that more clearly echo the rhetoric of resistance and power with which I opened this chapter, Derrida distrusts an effort

to claim a constitutive purity that would situate the absolute vegetarian subject outside the entire framework of violent immunization (sacrifice)—especially in the absence of that subject acknowledging that this purity is itself the product of a violent immunization (sacrifice) against the always self-risking, always impure participation in the field of power relations that ground all life.

Along these lines, it is important to see that the imperative to sacrifice sacrifice does not lead Derrida to embrace inaction, despite what some responses to his work might suggest. David Wood, for instance, views Derrida's caution concerning vegetarianism as tantamount to making a bad-faith analogy between the mass physical and emotional suffering of meat-eating sacrifice and a merely symbolic sacrificial act, whose relatively minor violence consists only in "allow[ing] vegetarians to buy good conscience on the cheap" (32). The abyss Wood perceives between these two kinds of violence leads him to conclude that Derrida is irresponsibly conflating all forms of sacrificial violence, with the result that for Derrida, vegetarianism or any other kind of effort to eat more ethically is futile and thus unnecessary.[55] However, I contend that on this point, Wood entirely misses the substance of Derrida's critique: first, Derrida is making the crucial point that a vegetarian's tendency to disavow its own sacrificial means of

[55] This kind of reading of Derrida's work is not uncommon: see also, for instance, Paola Cavalieri's contention in *The Death of the Animal* that Derrida subscribes to an ethics in which "general legal rules can never produce justice" ("Pushing" 97) and that he "simply erases the problem of animal life by dismissing philosophical vegetarianism on the ground that, since when we introject corpses the operation is symbolic in the case of humans and both real and symbolic in the case of animals, the task of determining our responsibility is too 'enormous' to be undertaken" (98). For my take on her former claim, see below, especially the following footnote, in which I point to the fact that Derrida repeatedly asserts that legal rules are wholly necessary and integral to the realization of justice, yet insufficient on their own. As for her latter argument, I would merely register at this point that it bears striking resemblance to Wood's response.

reinforcing its thoroughly humanist subjectivity does nothing, ultimately, to help us rethink and thus transform the violent underpinnings of factory farm violence—an ineffectuality that is all the more dangerous when vegetarian discourse frames itself as the only effective rejoinder to the sacrificial foundation of meat eating. As Matthew Calarco argues in response to Wood's charge against Derrida, "insofar as vegetarianism holds itself up as *the* moral mode of eating, it risks stalling the question of eating well and collapsing into a self-assured form of good conscience" ("Deconstruction" 195). Even more consequentially, however, because Derrida is suggesting that deconstructing sacrifice is co-extensive with deconstructing the whole apparatus of human subjectivity, the "question of eating well" is not merely a matter of the human subject looking elsewhere for things to eat, but rather involves a wholesale shift in one's orientation to the world—attempting the perhaps-impossible but wholly necessary project of sacrificing sacrifice:

> The moral question is thus not, nor has it ever been: should one eat or not eat, eat this and not that, the living or the nonliving, man or animal, but since *one must* eat in any case and since it is and tastes good to eat…*how* for goodness' sake should one *eat well* [*bien manger*]? And what does this imply? What is eating? How is this metonymy of introjection to be regulated?…One never eats entirely on one's own: this constitutes the rule underlying the statement, "One must eat well." It is a rule offering infinite hospitality. (Derrida and Nancy 282)

Sacrificing sacrifice would involve abandoning the fantasy, in other words, that we can render ourselves as being pure and whole through a disavowal of our connection to others, thereby constituting an act of disabusing ourselves that would undo much of what we currently understand as the basis for our

subjectivity. Since we cannot escape consumption, nor an environment of innumerable, inescapable others, Derrida suggests, it is high time we began framing the act of eating in terms of humility and hospitality, rather than in terms of certainty, good conscience, and mastery—vegetarian or otherwise. It may not initially sound like these assertions lay the ground for a re-theorization of vegetarianism, but I contend that they do hold that potential, in that here Derrida is pedagogically bringing the question back to how we will act in the world in the wake of acknowledging the necessities of consumption, thus aiming away from the distracting question of what purities or superiorities we might gain for ourselves in the process. It is worth emphasizing again, too, the admittedly difficult point that Derrida is not advocating inaction, just because he has embarked on deconstructing the very basis of human subjectivity. For the purposes of working on the project of eating well, Derrida insists, "a waiting period is neither possible nor legitimate," which is why "the subject is a pause, a stance, the stabilizing arrest, the thesis, or rather the hypothesis we will always need" (282).[56] The subject carries a responsibility to act in the name of justice

[56] The necessity for this kind of "provisional" structure on the ground of living is characteristic of Derrida's arguments about how any project of working for justice is bound to unfold in the world through a negotiation between imperfect, worldly institutions and ideals of justice. His essay "On Forgiveness" contains another particularly clear explanation of this framework: "if one wants, and it is necessary, forgiveness to become effective, concrete, historic; if one wants it to *arrive*, to happen by changing things, it is necessary that this purity engage itself in a series of conditions of all kinds" (44-45). The idea that the subject, even through and after its deconstruction, is the "hypothesis we will always need" is a crucial aspect of Derrida's ethics, in that it helps prevent his work from actually falling into the trap that many readers presume that it does: that as Cary Wolfe describes such a worry, "[i]t is understandable, of course, that traditionally marginalized peoples would be skeptical about calls by academic intellectuals to surrender the humanist model of subjectivity, with all its privileges, at just the historical moment when they are poised to 'graduate' into it" (*Animal* 7). Wolfe goes on from here to reiterate the Derridean argument that as long as the

even as that same imperative radically puts the very foundations of subjectivity in question.

It is this kind of necessary, radical humility for the subject's action in the world that Derrida thinks is missing from the current discourse on animal rights, which for him seems to go hand in hand with "absolute" vegetarianism. Derrida questions the intellectual and ethical responsibility of assigning rights to animals, when the current concept of rights is so bound to a "certain concept of the human subject, of post-Cartesian human subjectivity" (Derrida and Roudinesco 64), which presupposes the violent denial of subjectivity to those we do not recognize as possessing "this Cartesian moment of the *cogito*, of subjectivity, freedom, sovereignty, etc." (65). To be clear, it is not that Derrida rejects the concept of rights altogether; it is rather that the current notion of the (always already human) subject of rights is inadequate to the task of addressing, in a meaningful and transformative way, the violence we do to other animals. In other words, given the obvious failures of the regime of human rights to protect even the human beings it claims are within its purview, Derrida asserts the need to interrogate the foundations of the sacrificial, immunizing violence against animals of all kinds that has occasioned the call for rights. In fact, "to confer or to recognize rights for 'animals' is a surreptitious or implicit way of confirming a certain interpretation of the human subject, which itself will have been the very lever of the worst

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carnophallogocentric structure of human subjectivity goes unchallenged, however, "the humanist discourse of species will always be available for use by some humans against other humans as well" (*Animal* 8).

violence carried out against nonhuman living beings" (65). Although Derrida asserts that the concept of rights, "as the product of a history and of a complex set of performatives, must be relentlessly analyzed, reelaborated, developed, and enriched (historicity and perfectibility are in fact essential to it)" (65), he seems to feel that the blanket application of the current concept of rights to animals constitutes a refusal to engage in such analytical and deconstructive work; it remains, in other words, an irresponsible capitulation to a wholesale transference of a static version of rights to a context in which it performs what can only be described as bad-faith conceptual work, not properly ethical work.

At this point, it makes sense to circle back to what I identified as the second of two main problems Derrida seems to have with "absolute" vegetarianism: alongside and through the first problem—the tendency to insufficiently apprehend the sacrificial basis of even vegetarian subjectivities—the "absolute" vegetarian would also potentially subscribe to a notion of ethics as a prescriptive program. In its very name, in its very conceptual definition, "vegetarianism" seems to posit a set of ethical rules instead of a continual critical relationship to one's own subjectivity and its hospitality or lack of hospitality to others. Animal theorist Erica Fudge has recently illustrated this readily attributable quality of vegetarianism: "I want to make a claim that it is ontologically (if not always practically) easier being a vegetarian than being a meat-eater because meat eaters have such a hard time of it. What is edible and not

edible is not clear for them" (152).[57] Not all flesh falls reliably into an accepted category of "edible," so Fudge argues that categorization for vegetarians is immeasurably more tidy and easy: anything but meat is acceptable. As Cary Wolfe suggests, Derrida would undoubtedly worry about any program that "reduces ethics to the very antithesis of ethics by reducing the aporia of judgment in which the possibility of justice resides to the mechanical unfolding of a positivist calculation" (*Animal* 69). The problem with ethical programs, indeed, goes beyond a mere absolving of the necessity for thought. Given the imperative for radical humility that Derrida introduces to the project of sacrificing sacrifice as the basis of subjectivity, the kind of "action" that one makes in the name of ethics and justice is bound to be of a different order than the one we are accustomed to associating with the liberal and liberated "man of action." As I have already noted, Derrida follows Levinas in asserting that no relationship, no act of eating, can deny for long, or in ethical good faith, that our hospitality to a host of unknowable others precedes and exceeds us: "[t]he host [we could also read "eater"] is a hostage insofar as he is a subject put into question, obsessed (and thus besieged), persecuted, in the very place where he takes place, where, as emigrant, exile, stranger, a guest from the very beginning, he finds himself elected

[57] Fudge concludes her article by pointing briefly to Derrida's reading of the carnophallogocentric basis of meat eating, leading her to ultimately conclude that "perhaps I have to acknowledge that being a vegetarian is not easy after all, because if we were all vegetarians that would bring with it a radically new sense of who it is that we imagine ourselves to be" (162), thus only somewhat bringing her argument into line with Derrida's. Specifically, she invokes the potential transformation of the very structure of subjectivity arising out of asking questions of eating well, but defines the deconstruction of carnophallogocentrism as realizable through us "all" becoming vegetarians. Derrida, of course, explicitly argues against the idea that ceasing to eat meat guarantees a deconstructive response to sacrificial subjectivity.

to or taken up by a residence before himself electing or taking one up" (*Adieu* 56).[58] Therefore, Derrida argues that the truly ethical decision is necessarily made in a context of ultimate risk: not only am "I" not the self-assured, sole location from which guarantee-able ethical action springs, but I exist in an environment overrun with others whom I can never fully be certain I have not injured or affected in some unforeseen way. The decision to act, then, is always a risky leap that is nevertheless necessary:

> The hiatus, the silence of this non-response concerning the schemas between the ethical and political, remains…It marks the between-time or meantime of an indecision, the only basis on which responsibility and the decision are to be *taken* and determined…This non-response conditions my responsibility, there where I alone must respond. Without silence, without the hiatus, which is not the absence of rules but the necessity of a leap at the moment of ethical, political, or juridical decision, we could simply unfold knowledge into a program or course of action. Nothing could make us more irresponsible; nothing could be more totalitarian. (*Adieu* 116-17).

Here it is important to grasp that Derrida does not condemn or foreclose collective action as being inherently irresponsible or totalitarian; instead, he is insisting upon the inability to close the gap in any decision, between the potentially limitless demands of justice and our necessary response. We cannot guarantee the justness of any decision in advance: every ethical decision requires a leap into the

[58] It is worth gesturing to the fact, in the midst of this extensive moment of engagement with Derrida's work as a foundation for critical animal studies, that Judith Butler makes very similar claims about responsibility in terms of hospitality; for instance, that we need "a way of thinking about how we are not only constituted by our relations but also dispossessed by them as well" (*Precarious* 24), and that "when we think about who we 'are' and seek to represent ourselves, we cannot represent ourselves as merely bounded beings, for the primary others who are past for me not only live on in the fiber of the boundary that contains me (one meaning of 'incorporation'), but they also haunt the way I am, as it were, periodically undone and open to becoming unbounded" (28).

unknown—the unknown needs of others, the unknown consequences of our actions, and thus even, finally, the unknown demands of justice itself.

Yet where does Derrida's approach to ethics leave us, as human beings seeking a more ethical relationship with other animals in the shadow of the factory farm? For the time being, I will remain with critical animal studies and its interventions on vegetarianism in the wake of Derrida's pivotal influence on the field, in order to trace some of the reverberations of his ethical pedagogy as they inflect critical animal studies' framing (or lack of framing) of vegetarianism. I have noted that posthumanist animal studies critique directly on vegetarianism is relatively rare; perhaps some thinkers in this vein of critical animal studies are reticent to theorize vegetarianism on the basis that, like Derrida, they are concerned that the practice currently "belongs," in a sense, to those who are not invested in deconstructing either the humanist subject or its presumable certainties about others. After all, the question of vegetarianism is still deeply associated in many respects with thinkers like Peter Singer, for instance, who argues in one of a series of critical essays that are published as part of J.M. Coetzee's book *The Lives of Animals* that "[t]he value that is lost when something is emptied depends on what was there when it was full, and there is more to human existence than there is to bat existence" ("Reflections" 90). Wolfe suggests, in a register that evokes Derrida's concerns about animal rights discourse, that "the problem" with Singer is that he is "locked into a model of justice in which a being does or does not have rights on the basis of its possession (or lack) of morally significant

characteristics that can be empirically derived" ("Introduction" 13). Along these lines, any embrace of vegetarianism might seem constitutively premised in philosophical positions that take for granted "that conscious beings, and their interests, deserve different consideration according to their level of possession of certain characteristics" (Cavalieri, "Death" 3). Perhaps this correlation might help explain why vegetarianism is barely mentioned in an important recent book on animal ethics, Paola Cavalieri's *The Death of the Animal*, which includes commentary from many different philosophical traditions of animal ethics, both "analytic" and "continental." Across the range of philosophical positions represented—and despite the somewhat ironic fact that the book's introduction is by Singer—all contributors to the volume express a wariness of basing ethical consideration upon a perceived set of morally relevant characteristics in the animal other, an approach subsumed under the term "perfectionism."[59] Yet is vegetarianism necessarily reducible to such lapses into uncritical or pre-deconstructive notions of the assured human subject and its certainties about others?

Certainly, there is some work that draws on Derrida's careful ethical interventions into the human-animal relationship, which explicitly links these theories to a revitalized conceptual framework of vegetarianism. Calarco, for instance, identifies in Derrida's work on "eating well" a possible premise for

[59] I leave to the side, for the moment, the fact that many of the contributors express this wariness in tandem with locating the tendency towards "perfectionism" in opposing philosophical approaches: as Wolfe suggests, the debate brings into relief the fact that "what analytic philosophy thinks constitutes its *anti*anthropocentrism is precisely what constitutes its *anthropocentrism* for 'continental' philosophers" ("On A Certain" 124).

beginning to articulate a form of veganism that "is impassioned by an ideal of maximum respect for animals and that structurally disallows complacency or good conscience of any sort" (*Zoographies* 136). For Calarco, a certain humble embrace of veganism is not necessarily incompatible with an acknowledgement that the potential for doing violence to others is inescapable. As long as we "proceed agnostically and generously, as if we might have missed or misinterpreted the Other's trace" ("Toward" 81), Calarco suggests that vegetarianism is consistent with Derrida's ethical orientation to animals. Moreover, Calarco posits the legitimacy of the vegan's focus on limiting violence to animals in particular—when of course, in a Derridean-Levinasian framework of ethics, the constitutive un-knowability of all others would beg the question of focusing our efforts on those we currently deem "food animals." Calarco argues that in the context of strategically disrupting metaphysical anthropocentrism, challenging the traditional forms of essentialism we have long applied specifically to animals, reworking the long-perceived opposition between environmental ethics and animal ethics, and addressing the undeniable violence of the factory farm ("Toward" 82-83), that it is a justifiable ethical risk to focus our efforts on reducing violence done to food animals—a risk "without any pretense of fully representing or understanding those singular beings we call animals" (84). Calarco makes an important intervention here, taking some crucial initial steps toward rendering what a critical veganism to come might look like.

Leonard Lawlor, too, sees a similar potential for rearticulating vegetarianism in a way that propels outward from Derrida's work on animals, if such a project may involve a certain measure of countersignature, or of following Derrida's ethical call according to its spirit and not its letter. Like Calarco, Lawlor attempts to strip back the assumption of purity so often seen in vegetarian subject formation, to start the project anew at the aporetic and necessarily "impure" moment of decision-making:

> [w]ith this idea of the least violence, with this idea of a more sufficient response, what I am trying to do (and I think this is something that Derrida himself has not done) is occupy a space between undecidability and prescription. I am trying to occupy a space between saying almost nothing…and saying too much (laws for the treatment of animals, laws of vegetarianism, for example). (108-09)

This kind of vegetarianism without guarantee would be, according to Lawlor, "a kind of vegetarianism that is compatible with a minimal carnivorism, but what I am really advocating is a kind of asceticism" (105). In other words, Lawlor suggests that just because Derrida argues that it is impossible not to "partake of animals, even of men," the possibility of a "partaking" with less violence, or "a minimal carnivorism," is far from logically precluded.

Compatible with this line of critique are some of the key arguments for vegetarianism made by Carol J. Adams in *The Sexual Politics of Meat*. Specifically, Adams foregrounds less an emphasis upon the assumption of a triumphantly pure vegetarian subjectivity, than a focus upon a vegetarianism that avows connection with one's surroundings and between structural oppressions. The process of attaining vegetarian awareness involves, for Adams, practicing the

ability to "name the relationships": exploring "the connection between the meat on the table and a living animal; between ourselves and the other animals; between our ethics and our diet; and the recognition of the needless violence of meat eating" (189). Of course, it would remain necessary to remain vigilant in our ascription of "needlessness" to meat-eating violence that we do not buttress a form of human subjectivity that can claim a pure separation from all violence, but Adams's attention to the inescapable relationality of the human subject potentially helps guard against such a possibility. Like Derrida, Adams also helps us acknowledge and unpack the notion of sacrificial value: "[i]n seeing the nothingness of meat, we strip it of its phallocentric meaning, and deny it any symbolic, patriarchal meaning that requires an absent referent" (191). In other words, Adams seeks to break the melancholic spell of carnophallogocentric substitution: meat loses its wondrous capacity to build metaphysical subjects, and is "returned" to being intelligible as the muscles of dead animals.

In short, there is definitely work being done in animal studies that refrains from presuming that vegetarianism is locked in an uncritical relationship with the humanist human subject, or with the idea that admitting connection to the other requires a presumption of sameness in the other. In other words, there are certainly instances in which the field is working through some of its own immunizing tendencies that I mentioned at the outset of this chapter, namely, its defensive shielding against too much thought about the critical possibilities of vegetarianism. Yet the project for articulating vegetarianism forthwith depends

upon developing and growing such openings toward a pedagogy of life that calls critical attention to and resists factory farm pedagogy, finding new ways to pedagogically re-articulate such theories in a broader cultural context that is nothing if not complicated. To revisit my ultimate goal in this chapter of translating the insights of critical animal studies into a pedagogical project of critical veganisms, the task now at hand would be to intervene in the sphere of public pedagogy on eating in ways that seek to emphasize principles of critical pedagogy, or in Giroux and Roger Simon's words, a reflexive and critical "educational practice that expands human capacities in order to enable people to intervene in the formation of their own subjectivities and to be able to exercise power in the interest of transforming the ideological and material conditions of domination into social practices that promote social empowerment and demonstrate possibilities" (166). Of course, I do not mean to frame critical animal studies as a pure space of critique that should now be imparted to the wider culture from the "top" down; instead, as my critique of the field has already suggested, I am merely convinced that the posthumanist strain of animal studies, despite its perhaps inevitable immunizations and humanist re-inscriptions, nevertheless has something profound to offer any effort to articulate a pedagogy of human and animal life capable of posing a major challenge to factory farm pedagogy.

PETA: Treading Water

At this point, I want to introduce several pedagogical obstacles to the project of taking up the issue of eating factory-farmed animals critically, and discuss them with reference to some key examples of current efforts to educate the public about the factory farm, and about vegetarianism as a potentially just means of resistance to that institution. As we shall see, creating the conditions for a critical animal pedagogy to come involves far more than asserting the necessity to take radical responsibility for deconstructing the sacrificial mode of relating to the other that we have wrought as a species—as if this were ever a simple task in the first place. Foremost, of course, the project must unfold in the public context of a hostile neoliberal culture that as I have already suggested following Henry Giroux and others, generally lacks the language, the will, and the necessary infrastructure for undertaking democratic, collective projects of resistance to dominant intensifications of power. Additionally, in attempting to forge an alternative pedagogy of life to the zombie pedagogy of the factory farm, we are faced with multiple further obstacles, including a collective resistance to engaging with and apprehending the factory farm, the necessary negotiation of a social field that is premised to a significant degree in the assumption of given identities, and a hierarchical system of privilege that further complicates any call for transforming our relationship to structures of domination in the realm of food choice.

Before I turn to my chosen examples of current vegetarian pedagogy, I will briefly develop a fuller sense of the contours of these latter obstacles to

critical animal pedagogy, beginning with our cultural resistance to engaging the factory farm. Generally, I would posit that the factory farm impels what Deborah Britzman calls "difficult knowledge," or "a knowledge that demands something of the learner; a knowledge of the working through of the defense and the resistance to reorganizing one's ego boundaries in such a way that the original defense against encountering the other is not reenacted" ("If the Story" 42). In other words, in discussing together publicly the multiple violences of the factory farm—including but likely not limited to the violence done to the animals, the violence done to our ideals about our own humaneness, and the violence constituted by the fact that we always only gain knowledge of it after the fact—we are inevitably met with individual and collective resistance not only to new knowledge on the topic, but even more difficult, a resistance to thinking about what we already know. After all, despite how "information" about the factory farm is often framed by organizations like PETA, in most cases we are not freshly encountering the fact of the factory farm: to invoke again Derrida's assertion with which I opened the introduction to this thesis, "[n]o one can deny seriously any more, or for very long, that men do all they can in order to dissimulate this cruelty or to hide it from themselves; in order to organize on a global scale the forgetting or misunderstanding of this violence… Everybody knows what the production, breeding, transport, and slaughter of these animals has become" (*Animal* 25-26). For all participants in this pedagogical scene, interfacing with difficult knowledge in a way that is recognizable according to the terms of a critical pedagogy would

require, according again to Britzman, "a willingness to confront one's own discomfort, one's own inadequacy, and the conditions and actions that coalesce to foreclose the possibilities of self and other as ethical subjects" ("If the Story" 39). In other words, in order to be potentially transformative, the critical pedagogical process must include a commitment to interrupting and finding ways to redirect the tendency to deny the connections that have been lost through innumerable human-animal acts of violence. Presumably, this imperative is all the more crucial when such a denial comes in the form of replacing lost possibilities of engagement with the assumption of a sacrificial subjectivity that takes up and wields its separation from others in a defiant show of violent mastery—a subjectivity that as I briefly suggested with reference to Derrida's work, seems rather melancholic.

I want to emphasize here, however, that redirecting this melancholic movement in a project of critical pedagogy is no easy task. For instance, Cora Diamond points to the fact that apprehending animal suffering and our capacity to share it as fellow animals "is capable of panicking us. To be able to acknowledge it at all, let alone as shared, is wounding; but acknowledging it as shared with other animals, in the presence of what we do to them, is capable not only of panicking one but also of isolating one" (74). Moreover, Calarco asserts that part of the difficulty of refiguring the scene of ethics lies in its being inaugurated prior to thought: "[i]f we are to learn anything from Levinas, it is that ethical experience occurs precisely where phenomenology and rationality is interrupted,

and that ethical experience is traumatic, radically disruptive, and not easily captured by thought" ("Toward" 80-81). The scene of potential "working through" as an alternative to the melancholic appropriation of sacrificial subjectivity, then, is at least doubly complicated by its affective dimensions and its temporal displacement—into what Britzman, following Shoshana Felman and others, calls the crisis of witnessing: the apprehension that "the response can only be a working through—a mourning—of belated knowledge" (*Lost* 118). Reiterating the particular traumatic dimensions of this kind of temporal displacement, Cathy Caruth argues that "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely not known in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on" (*Unclaimed* 4). In short, "difficult" is no doubt an apt term for this context of pedagogy, and this difficulty perhaps makes it easier to see how the factory farm's zombie pedagogy of life could possibly have gained so much traction: the numbness associated with trauma pervades the scene.

The second challenge for critical animal pedagogy, one I will introduce even more briefly here, is the complex cultural "demand" for vegetarian discourses to participate, or at least negotiate, in a context of identity politics. This demand likely originates both in the desire within the vegetarian community to be heard and understood by its audience in an intelligible way, and in projections of a constitutive "vegetarian identity" that are articulated and applied by others; of

course, the two processes continually feed each other. At any rate, however, it is important to note that an embrace of "vegetarian identity" as a basis for membership in a community of people refraining from eating meat carries the paradoxical potential to interfere with a critical pedagogical effort to "enable people to intervene in the formation of their own subjectivities" (Giroux and Simon 166). While a vegetarian identity politics undoubtedly engenders a certain form of strategic empowerment for the vegetarian subject and community, is it ultimately a form of empowerment that enables the "exercise [of] power in the interest of transforming the ideological and material conditions of domination into social practices that promote social empowerment and demonstrate possibilities" (166)? Or, conversely, does a vegetarian identity politics potentially distract both the subject and community from the critical task of working towards an "educated hope," which is Giroux's term for hope as "a referent for civic courage and its ability to mediate the memory of loss and the experience of injustice as part of a broader attempt to open up new locations of struggle, contest the workings of oppressive power, and undermine various forms of domination" (*Politics After* 115)? Does a vegetarian identity politics, in short, enable or obstruct a critical pedagogical process of refiguring the carnivorous basis of human subjectivity into something more radically open to new and heretofore-unthought ways of, as Derrida puts it, "relating to the other and relating the other to the self" (Derrida and Nancy 281-82)? My wariness of "vegetarian identity" as a way into educated hope and learning to "eat well" is probably obvious, but as we will see, the

reasons for taking up a vegetarian identity politics are complex and worthy of thoughtful attention.

The third hurdle faced by current forms of vegetarian cultural pedagogy is one that is partly exacerbated, to be sure, by the contemporary apparatus of vegetarian identity politics: the current mainstream iterations of vegetarian pedagogy I will treat here do not seem to address sufficiently in their prescribed practices or rhetoric the force of differential levels of structural privilege. Consequently, I want to suggest, vegetarianism is potentially doubly experienced as a social wedge: not only is vegetarian subjectivity often framed as a laudable achievement conferring a certain sense of superiority on the subject, but the level of access to this form of subjectivity somewhat falls along the lines of other kinds of access—to kinds of food, for instance, or to a dependable support network, or simply to the time required to operate outside our culture's structures of convenience.

At this point, it makes sense to turn to concrete examples. First, it is worth highlighting certain educational materials of the most influential animal advocacy organization in North America, PETA. PETA's advocacy campaigns have become widely notorious: they often employ unapologetically brash rhetoric; flashy celebrity endorsements; overtly sexualized and objectifying representations of women's—and to a lesser extent, men's—bodies; nudity; and taboo comparisons between, for instance, the Holocaust and factory farm conditions. Each of these pedagogical strategies calls for specific analysis, but each also, I

think, signals the organization's rather basic capitulation to the neoliberal tendency toward translating any public expression of politics into the realm of the spectacle, a characteristic that is primarily notable here for its initial indication of PETA's general willingness to inhabit neoliberal forms of cultural pedagogy in the name of cultural visibility.

Here, though, I will focus first upon a PETA campaign that, by comparison with its more shockingly spectacular counterparts, would initially seem to be utterly un-provocative. The print campaign I am interested in here features one celebrity per "veggie testimonial,"[60] accompanied by a blurb about vegetarianism from the celebrity and, in larger print, the caption "I am [name], and I am a vegetarian [or vegan]." A particularly evocative example of the "veggie testimonial" campaign features a photo of Paul McCartney, pointing to his t-shirt that reads "EAT NO [drawing of a cow]," and accompanied by a narrative in small print: "Many years ago, I was fishing, and as I was reeling in the poor fish, I realized, 'I am killing him—all for the passing pleasure it brings me.' And something inside me clicked. I realized as I watched him fight for breath, that his life was as important to him as mine is to me" ("Paul"). Below, the slogan that is the hallmark of the campaign: "I am Paul McCartney, and I am a vegetarian." The slogan visually and rhetorically figures McCartney as having

[60] The celebrities with a public service announcement following this campaign template included on PETA's website archive of print PSAs: musician Paul McCartney, Ultimate Fighting Championship fighters Jake Shields and Mac Danzig, triathlete Rich Roll, musician Tom Higgenson, Welsh actor Owain Yeoman, professional boxer Maureen Shea, actor Alicia Silverstone, musician Joss Stone, musician Chris Adler, musician Brian Fair, and actor James Cromwell ("PSAs").

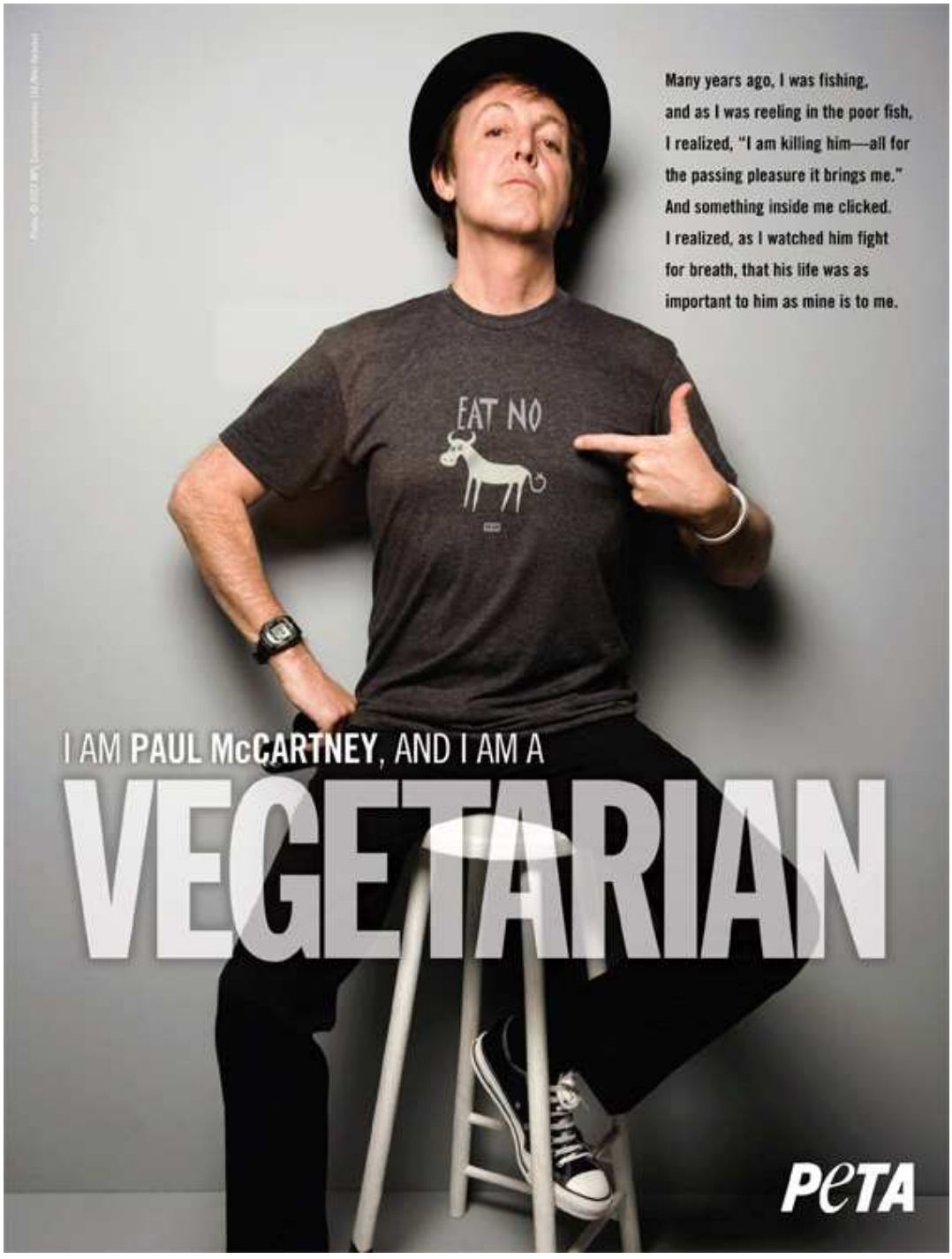
Many years ago, I was fishing,
and as I was reeling in the poor fish,
I realized, "I am killing him—all for
the passing pleasure it brings me."
And something inside me clicked.
I realized, as I watched him fight
for breath, that his life was as
important to him as mine is to me.
EAT NO
I AM PAUL McCARTNEY, AND I AM A
VEGETARIAN
PETA

Fig. 1

assumed vegetarianism in a manner that has become just as constitutive of his identity as is his name—if not more so, as "vegetarian" is in a larger font than his name.

What might we make of this ad in light of the obstacles to critical animal pedagogy I have identified? First, I would suggest that it illustrates the link I have been pointing to, between a traumatic apprehension of the other's suffering and a subsequent recuperation of the self in the wake of that trauma, through the substituted assumption of a vegetarian identity. The narrative of McCartney's trauma, rendered in small type, articulates his memory of having been "undone" by his apprehension of a relationship with the fish, in terms Judith Butler might have used describe it. This narrative of radical humility, however, is visually juxtaposed with McCartney defiantly pointing to his t-shirt, which offers a prescriptive solution, and the large caption "I Am a Vegetarian." It is as if the ad provides a spatial map of the carnophallogocentric process of subject formation: initial trauma, ultimately overridden by a renewed certainty that freedom from complicity with violence is purely possible through the assumption of a rather imperious form of subjectivity. Evidently, the subject here is still sacrificial, in Derrida's terms: there is seemingly still a melancholic mastery of the self through a repudiation of the loss of connection with others, but instead of being manifested in killing and eating the animal, the sacrificial repudiation takes the form of a denial of any complicity with such violence. In other words, what is sacrificed is not the literal animal, but the subject's relationship with that kind of

violence. Significantly, especially for the purposes of critical pedagogy, both kinds of carnophallogocentric subject are constituted through a denial of connection with others.

Inevitably, though, the ad performs more than a rehearsal of the teleological process of carnophallogocentric subject formation. In what ways does the ad perhaps signal the inevitability of an engagement with a vegetarian identity politics in the public sphere? Would McCartney's vegetarianism be intelligible in the context of public pedagogy *without* his performative participation in the discourse of identity? Further, is there perhaps a sense in which McCartney's very gesture of pointing toward his prescriptive t-shirt is readable as his necessary and perhaps fraught implication in cultural discourses that both precede and exceed him? In the interest of encouraging a critical pedagogical engagement with such representations, perhaps it is this quality of the ad's iterative insistence upon vegetarian identity—that is, its identifiably performative re-iteration of the imperatives of assuming an identity—that might aid us in taking up the ad's pedagogy of resistance in a way that *negotiates*, rather than merely re-inscribes or ignores, social contexts of normativity. I think it is clear that it will not be enough, in a critical pedagogical context, merely to work at collectively acknowledging the violence of carnophallogocentric subject formation and conceiving of forms of subjectivity that might enact a lesser violence: just as necessary is a collective attention to the ways that such explorations inevitably must take place in an already-existing environment of normative ascriptions of identity.

Simultaneously, though, I would suggest that the ad also implicitly participates in the neoliberal project of atomizing and antagonizing the public sphere. Is there not a sense in which McCartney physically and rhetorically poses in a way that implies that he is throwing down his vegetarianism as a kind of gauntlet? In what ways does the defiant positioning of the imagery and of the dominant rhetoric of the ad potentially distract us from the project of working together to address injustice? Of course, various responses are possible, but I argue that this representation of a highly personalized assumption of vegetarian mastery carries a specific potential to alienate and polarize potential learners. The trouble with individualizing the solution to systemic injustice done to animals is that, implicitly, the *problem* is similarly individualized, and is located in the individual subjects that have not yet assumed a vegetarian subjectivity. And to be sure, these pre-vegetarian subjects do not simply populate a level playing field of subjects that either care or do not care: because PETA implicitly associates vegetarianism with a carnophallogocentric sense of mastery, autonomy, and as Derrida would characterize it, symbolic carnivorousness, the form of vegetarianism being set forth here is differentially accessible—that it appears to be so accessible to a figure of utter privilege like Paul McCartney is perhaps no surprise. Thus, not only do vegetarian subjects of this stripe potentially sacrifice a certain connection to other nonhuman animals, but also to other humans who may not have the privilege, the means, or the will to assume this particular form of mastery. Again, here we can discern a form of resistance that is premised in a

purifying immunization of the human, and in a way that rather seamlessly dovetails with the individualizing pedagogy of neoliberal biopolitics.

In general, PETA maintains a rather confused position on vegetarianism as a personalized choice. On one hand, their website extols consumer choice as an ethical opportunity: "[i]n today's world of virtually unlimited choices, animal exploitation is simply unacceptable…We have the power to spare animals excruciating pain by making better choices about the food we eat, the things we buy, and the activities we support" ("All About"). On the other hand, the website makes a more structural ethical claim, that "[f]rom a moral standpoint, actions that harm others are not matters of personal choice…Our society now encourages meat-eating and the cruelty of factory farming, but history teaches that society also once encouraged slavery, child labor, and many other practices now universally recognized as wrong" ("Vegetarianism"). It is in the slipshod combination of these stances that PETA's latter message about structural injustice becomes enmeshed in accusatory, individualizing rhetoric that carries the potential to foreclose critical engagement. As Maria Mika notes in her analysis of a focus group's responses to PETA campaigns, "when one is confronted with personal and aggressive attacks condemning meat consumption, it is one's own behavior being condemned: the enemy is thyself. The discussants took umbrage at both the content and the portrayal of themselves as culprits" (932). In other words, it seems that this pedagogical approach is inherently more likely to provoke a defense against difficult knowledge than an engagement with it. It is also

important to note that as Cathryn Bailey has observed, "vegetarianism has sometimes been dismissed as a bourgeois lifestyle choice, one deeply reflective of a privileged identity. Certainly, to be able to turn away nourishment of any kind often says something about one's level of privilege" (46). In this light, PETA's rhetorical presumption that all human subjects have equal access to "virtually unlimited choices," potentially renders PETA's subsequent assertion of the universal immorality of human-animal violence into yet another instrument in the longstanding tradition of morally condemning the structurally disadvantaged.

Moreover, I would argue that PETA's emphasis upon a pure vegetarian mastery informs its apparent complicity with the perpetuation of other forms of violence. For instance, a recent print ad features Pamela Anderson posing nearly naked, her body marked up to resemble a diagram of meat cuts, with the caption "all animals have the same parts: have a heart, go vegetarian" ("Pamela"). Versions of this image have long been used in feminist-vegetarian discourses as a particularly overt piece of evidence for the structural analogy between misogyny and speciesism. A reproduction of an earlier iteration of this image—ie. not the Pamela Anderson version—is found on the cover of Adams's *The Sexual Politics of Meat*. To return to the version represented in this ad though, first, the accusatory implication that individuals who have not yet gone vegetarian are, so far, lacking hearts, is not necessarily conducive to the negotiation of a critical agency in the reader. However, here I am even more interested in the complicated repudiation of loss figured in this ad. The dead animal's body that would normally

Fig. 2

be marked up in this fashion disappears—becoming, according to terms used by Adams, the "absent referent" for the structural violence of sexism. In its place, Anderson offers up a representation of her (alive) body, which simultaneously figures a fantasy of violence against women—specifically, the ability to cut up and consume them—and her vegetarian subjectivity's capacity to counteract the loss of the dead animal through her very substitution of her own alive body for the dead animal. To complicate matters further, it is possible to read this ad in the context of the meat-woman diagram's prior use in feminist discourses as a site of represented injustice. On such a reading, the ad spectacularizes Anderson's ostensible association with feminism, both appropriating the power that is part of feminist resistance for the purposes of her own representation of vegetarian

mastery, and simultaneously depoliticizing that form of power by converting it into mere instrumentalizable spectacle. The uncanny re-inscription of structural violence thus becomes perversely interwoven with Anderson's uncanny claim that she has had done with loss through assuming vegetarian mastery. In other words, Anderson re-appropriates both the lost animal and the painful legacy of a sexist cultural tendency to degrade women by equating them with structurally devalued animals, redeploying these connotations into a presentation of her vegetarian body that she can now claim is "empowered" because it represents her conversion of pain into the action of the self-assured vegetarian subject.

Of course, it is important to read PETA's pedagogical strategies as indicative, at least in part, of the difficulty of communicating a relatively marginal stance on justice. Indeed, drawing on Gramsci's theorization of hegemony, Giroux and Simon note that "[i]n the struggle to open up its own spaces for resistance and affirmation, subordinated cultures have to negotiate and compromise around *both* those elements they give over to dominant culture and those they maintain as representative of their own interests and desires" (164). My point is that the pedagogical compromises PETA tends to make are potentially quite costly for the project of critical transformation. The pedagogical shortcut PETA takes—the assurance that loss is not inevitable, and that human-supremacist notions of humaneness are wholly recuperable—carries, in my view, a formidable foreclosing force. PETA's claim on its website that "[i]t is sometimes necessary to shake people up in order to initiate discussion, debate,

questioning of the status quo, and, of course, action" ("Why does PETA") begs the question: do the strategies I have outlined truly question the status quo, or even "shake people up" in the critically productive ways that PETA seems to hope they will? Or, conversely, do they reiterate the terms of neoliberal biopolitics by articulating a pedagogy of life that renders any marshalling of resistant force as co-extensive with the effort to immunize the human against both too much thought, and other lives?

I will conclude my reading of PETA's pedagogical approach with a brief reference to a non-PETA product of vegetarian cultural pedagogy that attests to my argument that the particular construction of vegetarian identity I have been tracing in this section is not limited to the actions of one organization. T-shirts emblazoned with pro-vegetarian messages have long been a staple of vegetarian pedagogy, yet here I will call attention to one in particular, produced recently by the vegan company Food Fight Grocery, and appearing in several popular online vegan stores. It reads, "Never Trust an Ex-Vegan." I have struggled with my own response to this pedagogical product, especially after reading an online discussion of the shirt during which it was pointed out that no one would have a problem with a shirt reading "never trust an ex-anti-racist," with the implication that any discomfort with the shirt is evidence of latent speciesism—an inadequate grasp of our treatment of animals as a fundamental justice issue (Ernst). My concern with both the shirt and the charge of internalized speciesism against vegans like me who may question the shirt, is that the pedagogical call for justice becomes lost in

a fugue of guilt, accusation, and assumed superiority for certain human subjects. Ultimately, though the shirt may be aiming at reinforcing a commitment to justice for animals that so often gets lost in the shuffle of a culture that can be hostile to such imperatives, the overriding pedagogical call of this shirt is for loyalty to a certain iteration of human subjectivity. To return to Britzman once more, she argues that attempts to enforce this kind of loyalty can become obstacles to the transformation sought after in critical pedagogy: "what seems to be in need of attention is how this demand to remain loyal shuts out insight into the conflicts, ambivalences, and desolations that are part of the work of mourning…Indeed, the demand to be loyal actually may work as a disavowal of the conflicts that provoke the reasons why we must demand something of each other" (*Lost* 133). Indeed, the particular demand for loyalty articulated by the shirt begs the question: does the pedagogical process of learning, as a culture, how to transform our relationship with other animals, depend solely upon the embrace of veganism as a discreet and exclusive form of human identity—exclusive, that is, of both violence and of those humans who have not yet "seen the light"? My wager is that it does not, and that in fact, fostering commitment to thinking through and refiguring our treatment of animals as a justice issue depends upon not only the processive and collective apprehension and rethinking of static and impermeable identity categories, but also a renewed commitment to creating the conditions for educated hope. Along these lines, instead of directing energy and focus solely toward the consolidation of a vegan identity that can ensure its own survival in a

hostile environment, in the long term it also behoves us, in whatever corner of the impoverished commons we can claim and repopulate, to critically explore how we might work toward justice in a manner that does not necessarily strip us of our meagre, existing self-protections, but that at least remains committed to carefully examining any new forms of mastery we might be tempted to wield in the face of a culture that seems fortified against critically transforming the factory farm. What if we could, together, begin conceiving of a critical animal pedagogy and a critical veganism that prioritize a contingent effort to apprehend the needs of others, over the imperative to solidify a vegan identity, collective and individual, which is framed as a final accomplishment for the human subject?

Critical Animal Studies to Come

I will revisit such questions below, but first I will make a link between the pedagogy currently articulated by organizations like PETA and the scepticism about the ethical viability of vegetarianism that is held not only by Derrida, as I have noted, but that is also replicated in popular writing about omnivorous food choice, which is a genre that is rapidly becoming a seminal context for future work in critical animal studies and the way it will be received. Pollan, for instance, asserts in *The Omnivore's Dilemma* that "I have to say there is a part of me that envies the moral clarity of the vegetarian, the blamelessness of the tofu eater. Yet part of me pities him, too. Dreams of innocence are just that; they usually depend on a denial of reality that can be its own form of hubris" (362).

Again, we see the total equation of vegetarianism with an assumed human purity, and with a kind of human subjective accomplishment founded upon a fantasy of intersubjective certainty. Ultimately, however, I argue that this unexpected alliance between a certain strain of popular "ecological" thought and deconstructive theories of justice begs the question in one sense. Specifically, it is important to examine whether these definitions of vegetarian identity projected onto the animal advocacy movement are wholly coextensive with that movement's concept of vegetarianism: to be sure, PETA does not provide our culture's only iteration of vegetarian cultural pedagogy—though it undoubtedly remains the most highly visible one. Moreover, it is necessary to keep in mind the imaginative gains of the animal advocacy movement: if animal advocacy does currently tend to extend an inherently humanist model to other animals, one which had served as the means of oppressing them in the first place, at least the movement has been effective in focusing attention directly upon the ethical implications of killing animals for food, and upon the fact that today, such discussions must take place in the context of the mass suffering found on the factory farm—and not the Californian forest ecosystem of the wild boar, where Pollan situates his entire discussion of the ethics of killing in *The Omnivore's Dilemma*.

One of the first tasks, then, for a future vegetarian critical pedagogy is to continue interrogating our relationship to modes of sacrifice and the way they provide a framework for structuring both meat eating and vegetarian

subjectivities. It has become clear that sacrifice is not a substantive alternative to the pedagogy of life articulated on the factory farm—despite Grandin's hopes in this regard that I outlined in the previous chapter—but rather remains a complementary alibi for that operation. This collusion certainly seems manifest when Pollan subsumes any vegetarian implications of the factory farm under the sign of a bucolic scene of wild boar sacrifice, and it even more closely describes, to refer again to the previous chapter, Grandin's appeal to sacrifice as a kind of ethical salve for her work redesigning industrial farms and slaughterhouses.

If we have seen evidence to back up Derrida's claim that a logic of sacrifice underwrites not only mainstream meat-eating subjectivities, but also many of the forms of subjectivity that emerge in animal welfare, animal rights, and ecology, again, how might we begin to take up the project suggested by Calarco, Lawlor, and Adams, to theorize vegetarianism in a way that at least directly accounts for this residual humanism, if it does not eliminate it? In a way that ties together the so-called "continental" insight into the violence of humanist subjectivity, the attention to the injustice of mass suffering and poor material conditions of the factory farm that we get from animal rights, and the emphasis upon constitutive interspecies relationality that is the hallmark of ecological movements? I want to begin theorizing a vegan subject that incorporates each of these insights; that responds to Derrida's provocation that previous attempts to get beyond humanism "remain profound humanisms *to the extent that they do not sacrifice sacrifice*" (Derrida and Nancy 279): with particular reference to the

meat-eating subject, this work largely remains yet to be done. While sacrificing sacrifice is clearly an aporia or even a logical impossibility in one sense, I see in this aporia a chance to work beyond humanism's injunction to fortify the human subject through the killing of animals—or the killing of the killing of animals, in the case of some of the re-inscriptive vegetarian narratives I have examined in this chapter. Eating meat is a constitutive accomplishment for the carnophallogocentric human subject. Likewise, *eliminating* meat from the diet has often become a constitutive accomplishment for the vegetarian human subject. Sacrificing sacrifice might mean not being naïve enough to think we have eliminated sacrifice altogether, but instead, collectively embracing the process of fumbling past its promised pedigrees of human identity and subjectivity, whether vegetarian or carnivorous.

I see this kind of potential in a certain concept of veganism. As opposed to the version of vegetarianism in which the ethical subject is figured as having been achieved through the elimination of meat from the diet, veganism aims for the elimination of all animal products from the human life. It is certainly possible to view this aim as simply a more extreme sacrifice in the name of a more extremely pure human subject, and certainly some iterations of veganism seem to emerge along these lines. Yet in resisting this figuration of the vegan effort, in resisting the urge to make veganism a site of pure divorce from the ecological context of human and nonhuman life, I think that another possibility emerges. As Calarco notes, it is literally impossible to inhabit the vegan ideal: "no matter how rigorous

one's vegetarianism might be, there is simply no way to nourish oneself in advanced, industrial countries that does not involve harm to animal life (and human life as well) in direct and indirect forms" (*Zoographies* 134). Rather than indict veganism on this count, as many have done, I see a productive potential in it: the impossibility of attaining pure veganhood could open the way for a vegetarian subjectivity that does not hinge upon the neat and final achievement or accomplishment of a certain relationship to other animals.

Donna Haraway moves in this direction, I think, when she suggests that we move beyond an ethic that pivots on the imperative "Thou shalt not kill" towards an ethic oriented around the idea that "thou shalt not render killable" (105-06). I must point out that she is not trying to make an argument for veganism here, and this is another example of how we might rework ostensibly non-vegan arguments into a revitalized vegan philosophy. In her formulation, shifting to "thou shalt not render killable" shifts emphasis from ascertaining the human subject's success or failure in maintaining its own purity, to an ethic that directs its gaze upon the sacrificial price of such false purity—a price which consists of those lives that must fall through the cracks of "thou shalt not kill"—and to the embrace of an ethics that emphasizes our collective and continual responsibility to work out what it might mean to forge human subjectivity along lines of species humility that have heretofore eluded us. I think the ground under the feet of the masterful carnophallogocentric subject potentially shifts when the human being's lived relationship to the vegan imperative can only ever work asymptotically; that

is, imperfectly. Of course, one might contend that sacrificial logic never works perfectly either, and that my iteration of veganism has not wholly expunged sacrifice. Again, though, I am not seeking purity as a constitutive feature of my model of vegetarian subjectivity. I am merely suggesting that exploring vegetarianism as a contingent *effort* to reckon ethically with animals, rather than as a vegetarian subject's *accomplished task* of apprehending animal needs, may help begin moving us through the present tension between human-animal theory, animal rights, and ecology—to make theorizing vegetarianism in that breach a more possible, if still difficult, project.

One of the pedagogical obstacles such a rendering of vegetarian subjectivity undoubtedly faces is that it might sound as if we have taken away all the pleasure of assuming identity, and replaced this pleasure with a whole lot of arduous effort. This conclusion matters, since as Giroux and Simon remind us in the context of popular culture, "the production of meaning and the production of pleasure are mutually constitutive of who students are" (159). My rejoinder to such a potential objection is that with the right framing—"right" as in remaining open to new possibilities for being human while acknowledging and working through the loss of the old ways—it becomes possible to see that striving for human purity is not the only pleasure to be had. After all, who says that purity is always more pleasurable than messy engagement with the world? Again, both meat eaters and vegetarians are used to defensively framing veganism as an expression of the former orientation, rather than of the latter, but I hope I have

shown that the way we currently conceive of our subjectivities actually might provide more evidence that it is meat eating that is more inherently and constitutively concerned with purity and separation. When it comes to eating, it is time to explore other, less sacrificial registers of pleasure.

I would argue, for instance, that we already indulge a type of "dirty," complicit pleasure in our love for non-food animals. In other words, as Haraway, Marjorie Garber, and Alice Kuzniar among others have theorized in the "human-dog" vein of critical animal studies, we are used to loving animals in a way that maintains an uneasy complicity with violent symbolic appropriation of the other at the same time that it strives to limit or lessen violence at every turn: "[v]ia the dog, then, the human being comes to a deeper sense of what it means to be human, which is to say, to discover one's love for this totally other creature, together with one's full, compassionate identification with it" (Kuzniar 224). How might we continue theorizing a new relation to food animals that foregrounds this kind of messy, ambivalent, and risky connection, as informing both the human-animal relationship and pedagogical relationships between vegetarian and non-vegetarian subjects?

There are already efforts in the vegan community to begin unpacking the hegemonic representation of the pure vegan subject structured by self-denial and what we might call "other-denial." Erik Marcus, the author of several books on vegan activism and the publisher of popular vegan news site *Vegan.com*, argues:

> I think anytime we throw our identity in people's faces, it's far more likely to create a sense of separation than it is to inspire respect…Shouldn't I

> instead be emphasizing the values we share: compassion, love of animals, and kindness? I think that the less your advocacy is about your personal identity and the more it's about the animals, the more effective your efforts will be. ("Attack")

Marcus could not be more of a "hardcore" vegan, and yet there is nothing un-pleasurable about the pedagogical connection he wishes to establish with others here; moreover, it is a form of connection that explicitly resists vegan subject formation as a mechanism of separation and purity.

Of course, many people are convinced, too, that the forging of a vegan subjectivity involves a renunciation of gustatory pleasure: I would argue that aside from the resistance to thought that attends the difficult knowledge of factory farm violence, the supposedly necessary relinquishment of the pleasure of eating is the second most formidable obstacle to thinking through the refusal to eat animals. I want to return briefly here to a current effort in the vegan community to address this concern, with which I opened the chapter. Isa Chandra Moskowitz is arguably the most popular vegan cookbook author publishing today, and she has explicitly framed vegan cooking in terms of pedagogical imperatives. "Vegan Culinary Activism" or "Baketivism" involves purposefully cooking and sharing the most delicious vegan food possible. In a deliberate attempt to mitigate the trauma of engaging difficult knowledge, Moskowitz argues:

> while most people know in their hearts harming animals is wrong, their reaction more often than not is to turn away rather than to turn vegan. Presenting the vegan lifestyle in a positive light makes thinking about it easier…the more the word vegan is out there and associated with something positive and yummy, the easier the transition will be…While these things may seem obvious, maybe even insignificant in light of what

> animals are going through every day, look at it as a chipping away at our meat and dairy based culture. ("Vegan")

As Moskowitz acknowledges above, it may seem almost silly to advocate addressing a justice issue through the sharing of a cupcake. However, it remains the case that as the supposed loss of culinary pleasure is one of the mostly commonly invoked defenses against a consideration of veganism, one of the only possible ways of working through that defense is gaining access to vegan food that is just as enjoyable as animal food. Of course, this approach is necessarily complicated in terms of critical pedagogy: it is crucial not to re-enact the defense against loss by insisting that vegan food is an exact substitution for animal food to the extent that animal food has never really been lost. It is necessary when introducing others to the pleasures of vegan food not to conflate the potential depth of that pleasure—which can, I assert as a former meat lover, actually surpass the gustatory pleasure of animal food—with a defensive conclusion that absolutely nothing has been foregone in the renunciation of animal food.

Ultimately, the model of veganism I am tracing here could enact a form of resistance that relinquishes the fantasy of operating outside power relations; instead, it would involve certain concerted efforts to intensify, by forging new connections and shared practices, relationships to other lives that are marked by a willingness to risk being with others without immunizing the self, or at least striving to enact some kind of lesser immunization. With regard to what this pedagogy of life would mean for the material practices of consumption, by delegitimizing the immunizing properties of consuming the other, it becomes

more possible to frame the abstention from animal products not as an attempt to gain purity for the human subject, but instead as part of a risky collective effort to organize an intensification of relational practices that resist the factory's farm's zombie imperative to continually accelerate our consumption, under threat of death. This kind of veganism materially articulates that there is a potential alternative to the factory farm's consumptive imperative that is worth cultivating: that we can choose to intensify other practices. Along these lines, the rhetoric of the boycott[61] potentially gains renewed force as a material framework for critical vegan pedagogy, articulating a collective means of re-directing relationships away from the spiralling consumption of animal products and toward the realization that it is possible to live outside the factory farm's prescribed frame of life, providing we continue to forge contingent and risky relationships with one another.

In closing, I offer a reading of one of my favourite vegetarianism-themed t-shirts, one that I think illustrates some of what I am trying to argue concerning the possible futures of vegetarian pedagogy. On this garment, made by the Herbivore Clothing Company and currently out of print, there is a line drawing of an iconic Hawaiian-shirt-like "desert island," with a pig standing under two palm trees. Under the drawing, the shirt reads "Vegetarianism: Wish You Were Here." Rhetorically and figuratively, the text and graphics both figure vegetarianism as an orientation or location, rather than as an identity—a position in relation to

[61] I should note that Adams explicitly designated her veganism as a form of boycott in the course of delivering a keynote address at the Animals and Animality Across the Humanities and Social Sciences Conference at Queen's University in June 2010.

animals, although it remains uncertain whether the faraway, faceless pig in the rendering will ever really be accessible to anyone. There is no pedagogical guarantee here: as Cathy Caruth recently asserts in *PMLA*, "[p]edagogy must flirt with failure, since it is only in its own precariousness that the learning of singularity and chance may arise" (1092). Moreover, the text especially invokes a grappling with loss: specifically, the loss of *you*, the addressee of the shirt. I am reminded here of Butler's contention in *Precarious Life*, that "[y]ou are what I gain through this disorientation and loss. This is how the human comes into being [and perhaps the animal, I would suggest], again and again, as that which we have yet to know" (49). The pedagogical moment of this shirt, I want to argue, takes place in the wake of the cultural conflicts over factory farm injustice, perhaps even signalling the possibility for a collective embrace of an "educated hope" forged in the belated time of mourning. The vegetarian reaches across the lines of identity categories, appealing to a future friendship with you, in the company of fellow animals. A critical animal pedagogy *l'avenir*, after all.

Conclusion

A central gambit of this thesis has been that the institution of the factory farm is not merely a physical site at which human bodies manipulate, confine, and kill nonhuman bodies. Such a definition of the factory farm may be true in one sense, but it hardly captures all that the factory farm does. In any effort to grasp the significance of the factory farm, it is much more useful to begin identifying that site as the expression of a particular pedagogy about life, which has profound material and epistemological effects in all of the lives it touches. As we have seen, the conclusions about both human and animal life that are modelled in the operations of the factory farm are as pervasive in our culture as they are reductive: everybody knows, to echo Derrida's diagnosis of our awareness of the factory farm, the neoliberal biopolitical premise that survival is a matter of ever-intensifying competitive consumption. Participation in this totalized eating contest, the story goes, is our only defense, our only hope of attaining immunity, from joining the ranks of the dead and disposable.

In this conclusion, we may approach the question of factory farm pedagogy through the conceptual lens of what Jeffrey Nealon has asserted is Foucault's primary question about any expression of power: What does it cost? In a dialogue about justice, initially this may seem to be the *worst* question we could ask of factory farm pedagogy. Has not the emphasis upon the economic bottom line served as a prime mechanism of the narrowing of consideration that we have been tracing here? Yet I invoke the language of cost as a means of critiquing anew

both what the factory farm teaches us, and what we teach each other in our efforts to grapple with that site's lessons. As Nealon argues, Foucault emphasizes discerning the cost of a given expression of power in terms of maintaining "a consistent emphasis on [its] social *effects*: determining 'cost' here is a diagnostic operation rather than a primarily philosophical, moral, or epistemological one" (20). The rubric of cost, in other words, provides us with an immanent means of assessing power's discrepancies, whose friction produces provocative sparks from within the unthinking economy of power. Factory farm pedagogy—a model that asserts life is reducible to zombie existence—is undeniably expensive, for it operates at the expense of the utter impoverishment of our political and ethical considerations, laboriously attenuating our focus to one prescribed possibility for the expression of life. Moreover, as we have seen, its profound intensification of this one narrow relationship of mutual apprehension between lives entails astronomical costs for both human and animal life, primarily stemming from the unprecedented scale upon which life is now biopolitically designated as disposable waste. Along these lines, what are the costs of Grandin's fantasies of humaneness, for both human and animal lives? What are the costs of certain vegetarian fantasies of purity? What are the costs of my sketch of an alternative critical veganism-to-come?

Yet, we are reminded that determining cost in this manner is only a diagnostic tool. From here, it is our responsibility to take up the call to thought that is occasioned by the factory farm—critical thought, which propels radically

outward from any presumption that justice or ethics can be economized. What are the futures of the relationship between human beings and the nonhuman beings we currently treat as food? In reflecting upon which pedagogies of life would potentially cost us the fewest potentialities and possibilities for the stimulation of ethical thought, it is worth returning to Derrida's conclusion that "the question will come back to determining the best, most respectful, most grateful, and also most giving way of relating to the other and of relating the other to the self" (Derrida and Nancy 281-82). In other words, the ethical call is to "eat well," which Derrida insists is "a rule offering infinite hospitality" (281). To be sure, there is little that is hospitable in the pedagogy of the factory farm, or in the responses to the farm that most firmly re-inscribe its presumptions: our drive to immunize ourselves against too much thought, against "the animal," against each other—all of these immunizations constitute foreclosures of hospitality that incur grave costs to our ability to begin exploring new ethical relationships with ourselves and with others. Of course, it is impossible to know in advance the outcomes of striving to "eat well," or in other words, of attempting to mitigate as much as possible the obsessive enforcement of the immunizations that have cost us so much thus far. However, it seems that given the present situation, an orientation to eating that foregrounds hospitality to the other may be a necessary risk. In other words, the growing costs of *not* resisting the pedagogical assertions of the factory farm are already too high. Pedagogically and ethically reframing

consumption in terms of its potential hospitality or inhospitality to life—unknowable and known, thought and un-thought—may be our only hope.

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