

2016-01-01

# A Theory of Animal Oppression

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A THEORY OF ANIMAL OPPRESSION

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Master's Program in Philosophy

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## **Dedication**

I want to dedicate this MA thesis to my family and colleagues who have been truly supportive throughout the process of this project.

A THEORY OF ANIMAL OPPRESSION

by

SHARON STEPHANIA MURILLO MELCHOR, B.A. with Magna Cum Laude in  
Communication, Philosophy, and Psychology.

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Philosophy  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO  
August 2016

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my gratitude to my thesis committee, Drs. Steve Best, Deepanwita Dasgupta and Patryusha Basu. Thank you for the useful comments, remarks and engaging through the learning process of this master thesis. Furthermore, I would like to thank Steve Best for his continuous work and efforts in animal liberation. Also, I'd like to thank Dr. Joseph Ulatowski and Kim Diaz, who were supportive of this process. Dr. Marc Moffett without our meaningful conversations on animal rights. I would have not been so interested in developing more arguments.

During the period of two years Dean Patricia Witherspoon gave me her support in traveling to conferences and presenting my work on animal rights. I am grateful to the Liberal Arts College, and Ms. Cast, who was the one who arranged and planned all the administrative paperwork during my two years at this university.

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## INTRODUCTION

American society is characterized by indifference toward the notion of animal rights.<sup>1</sup> Americans are unaware or often ignore the fact that “more than 9,000,000 farm animals die each year in the U.S. and exceeds 70 billion globally.”<sup>2</sup> More than 6,000,000 animals die every hour, and die every second in slaughterhouses around the world.<sup>3</sup> These numbers reflect the reality of American meat consumption. Also, the treatment of animals in slaughterhouses and factory farms has been the subject of much debate amongst animal rights activists and ethicists. Videos have been posted online showing the reality behind the slaughterhouses. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) released a documentary titled, *Glass Walls*, with the slogan, *If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegetarian*, because it shows the reality behind the slaughterhouse walls.

The unethical treatment of animals can also be seen in circuses, zoos, and laboratories. Acknowledging that animals do not belong in laboratories or zoos has increased in past years. In animal research, the argument for experimenting on animals, and the suffering and death it causes them, is a "necessary evil" vital for human medical progress. As Peter Singer states in *Animal Liberation*, the medical knowledge derived from these experiments is questionable.<sup>4</sup> Documentaries have targeted the unethical treatment and confinement of orcas at Sea World, leading to an increase of protests and the possible closure of Sea World.<sup>5</sup>

The food products that we eat today are nothing compared to the food products that were produced years ago. The increase in the consumption of animal products has led to the use of hormones and other drugs in animals that increase the supply of animal products for consumers. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was created to ensure the safety of the nation's food supply.<sup>6</sup> Not only has the FDA failed to do so, it has also approved thousands of chemicals, such as synthetic hormone growth chemical to increase the production of meat.<sup>7</sup>



Different perspectives arise when we talk about animal rights. On the one hand, we talk about having empathy for dogs, cats, and other "domestic animals." This empathy does not always extend to cows, turkeys, chickens, pigs, and other "farm animals." Many say it is bad that they suffer, but when it is lunchtime, a steak sits on our plate. In *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat: Why It Is So Hard to Think Straight about Animals*, Melanie Joy analyzes the animal-human interaction, the moral complexities and most of the time our paradoxical relationship between humans and non-human animals.<sup>8</sup> For instance, Joy talks about most Americans' supporting the right to hunt and shoot some creatures, while protecting domestic animals. Despite more regulations and acknowledgment of the impact of killing animals and the ethical considerations behind it, "the number of animals killed each year for our dining pleasure has tripled from 3 billion a year to over 70 billion since the rise of the animal rights movement in 1975."<sup>9</sup>

Despite different studies showing the connection between various chronic diseases and meat consumption (see Micha, Wallace, & Mozaffarian; Jiang, Paik, Hankinson & Barr; Leo, Lawrence & Walker). Studies have also shown the connection between global warming and meat consumption (see Carlsson-Kanyama & Gonzalez; Marlow; McMichael, Powles, Butler, & Uauy), humans still continue to eat animal products. There has been an increase in meat production in the past years, however, justification of whether or not one attends circuses, zoos, Sea World, or a delicious steak for dinner, varies.<sup>10</sup>

In this thesis, I will argue that individuals often ignore the impact of animal exploitation and as the "oppressors", such that we do not even realize that we are oppressing animals and committing an injustice. We have the false belief that animals are inferior and that they serve a purpose in our lives. They live and die for our satisfaction. As we have been mentioning animal

rights, our behavior towards animals as a result of false superiority, and an axis of oppression known as speciesism.<sup>11</sup> I want to talk about animal oppression as a subject of justice. When people have the option to eat alternatives to animal products and yet still choose to eat animals, we are committing an injustice. My work should also deepen our understanding of anthropology studies of human interaction. Not only human-to-human but also human-to-nonhuman animal interaction.<sup>12</sup> My aim is to build a theory of animal oppression represented as an injustice. I will attempt to provide a justification for an alternative "axis of oppression" one that we have often ignored. I want to show that humans oppress animals, and thus that humanity per se is an oppressive group in relation to all other animal species. This new axis of oppression must be acknowledged as an existing one to allow for scholars, philosophers, and activists to talk about animal abuse as a different axis of oppression. I want to start a different conversation, one that acknowledges that if we do not want to be oppressed, we should not oppress others.<sup>13</sup>

## SECTION 1. BACKGROUND ON THE ANIMAL RIGHTS DISCOURSE

The discussion on animal rights or animal ethics is not a new debate. Different religions (Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism) have taken a stance towards animal rights, placing animals as sacred or equating animal souls to human souls. Eastern religions and philosophies embrace the essential tenet of harmlessness. This harmlessness principle includes animals. In different degrees, each religion protects other life forms.<sup>14</sup> Religions have adopted the protection of other life forms through different tenets of their views.

In philosophy, animal rights or vegetarianism can be traced back to Pythagoras (ca. 570 to ca. 490 BCE), who stated, “As long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other. Indeed, he who sows the seeds of murder and pain cannot reap the joy of love.”<sup>15</sup> Pythagoras was the first Greek philosopher who was recorded arguing for animal equality. After him, many more continued advocating for the abstinence of eating animal flesh on the basis of sentiment, feelings, soul, reincarnation, equality and health. Individuals from all around the world discussed the impact of eating meat. Socrates debated with Glaucon on why eating animals was unhealthy, inhumane, and unethical and could lead to war.<sup>16</sup> Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides argued that there was no difference between pains of a human being from that of other living forms.<sup>17</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer argued that “animals are without rights and the illusion that our treatment of them has no moral significance is a positively outrageous example of Western crudity and barbarity.”<sup>18</sup> Sri Aurobindo, an Indian freedom fighter, stated, “Life is life, whether in a cat, or dog or man. There is no difference there between a cat and a man. The idea of difference is a human conception for man's own advantage.”<sup>19</sup> Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy believed that as long as there are slaughterhouses, battlefields would continue to exist.<sup>20</sup> Richard D. Ryder, who coined the term *speciesism* (1970), stated;

Because one species is cleverer than another, does it give it the right to imprison or torture the less clever species? Does one exceptionally clever individual have a right to exploit the less clever individuals of his own species? To say that he does is to say with the Fascists that the strong have a right to abuse and exploit the weak - might is right, and the strong and ruthless shall inherit the earth.<sup>21</sup>

The argument to protect all forms of human life has been present for centuries. It has been a philosophical, feminist, and ethical discussion that has led to significant movements around the world. The list of animal welfare groups and animal rights number in the thousands. People are becoming more and more aware of the impact of meat consumption in the environment and ones own health. The reality of the slaughterhouses has been portrayed in different documentaries such as Black Fish, Vegeneducated, Forks over Knives, and has opened the eyes of individuals towards the harsh, inhumane, unethical treatment of animals.

Violation of rights, freedom, inhumane treatment, ethics and violence are all-important tenets of any viable and comprehensive theory of justice. Thus, to do just that, this thesis tries to embrace theories from feminism, political philosophy, animal rights movement, ethics and environmentalism. I try to focus on justice as a fundamental principle when we talk about animals and how a “just” society would treat other species. I will argue that societies in which alternative products to animal products are available but still, individuals choose not to buy these alternative products (tofu, quinoa, chia, seeds, soy), are committing an injustice to animals.

Theories of justice have dealt with the fundamental questions such as: Who are the citizens of a country and who deserves rights and liberties? How should political and economic resources be distributed? Political theorists have failed to include animals in the realm of justice. For instance, prominent philosopher John Rawls failed to include people with different abilities, children, and animals into his well-known theory of justice. In Western societies where alternative products are available, people still choose to eat animals. Whether for convenience,

taste or because this is what we have learned, such society is committing an injustice. Without the realization of this, justice will not be achieved even if institutions are granting the basic structure of rights and liberties. For an individual to develop its rational plan of life it will consist on avoiding factory animal products. I will show this by introducing John Rawls theory of justice.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I am going to explore John Rawls' classic work, *A Theory of Justice*, to understand the different elements of Rawlsian theory. I will then provide an argument against Rawlsian failure to include infants, people with different abilities and animals, in a theory of justice. I will argue that a theory of justice must include a discussion on human obligations toward other animals and the question of animal rights. However, I will anticipate an objection that this thesis might face. My argument embraces the importance for nomadic and hunting groups to consume animal products. I will develop this counterargument and show that under some circumstances it is allowed to consume animal products, specifically for both nomadic and hunting societies.

## CHAPTER 1. THEORY OF JUSTICE

John Rawls' ideal theory of justice is grounded on the idea that rationality is fundamental among individuals. Rational individuals will choose Rawls' two principles of justice that will regulate a just society. Rawls takes us into an exercise of imagination to justify the selection of these two principles of justice. Rawls suggests that we imagine the Original Position (OP), a hypothetical scenario that is "covered" by a veil of ignorance, in the OP individuals do not know anything about others,

That position is set up as a situation that is fair to the parties as free and equal, and as properly informed and **rational**. Thus, any agreement made by the parties as citizens' representatives is fair.<sup>22</sup>

The idea behind the veil of ignorance is to prevent individuals from knowing anything that may influence their decision on which principles ought to regulate society. Regardless of their natural endowments, Rawls argued that all rational individuals are going to desire to have something<sup>23</sup>, such as social primary goods. With social primary goods and Rawls' two principles of justice, individuals should have a clear set of resources to pursue their rational plans of life, regardless of the inequalities that may exist in society. Before moving forward with Rawlsian theory, one needs to understand one fundamental idea that Rawls seemed to have dismissed in the OP. Behind the veil of ignorance we do not know what gender, race, social and political status we are going to be. Being "blinded" from what we can be, we can consider the possibility of being born as animals. Given this possibility, does one want to protect animal rights and dignity? We will move forward to analyze Rawlsian theory.

In *Theory*, it is presumed that the basic structure of society, the social and political institutions,<sup>24</sup> is going to distribute social primary goods, these are "rights, liberties, and opportunities, and income and wealth, (self-respect)."<sup>25</sup> The importance of the notion of primary

social goods is that with these, individuals are going to be able to carry out their rational plans of life and develop their conception of the good.

These goods are things citizens need as free and equal persons living a complete life; they are not things it is simply rational to want or desire, or to prefer or even to crave.<sup>26</sup>

Primary social goods play an active role in allowing individuals to achieve their goals. “With more of these goods men can generally be assured of greater success in carrying out their intentions and in advancing their ends, whatever these ends may be.”<sup>27</sup> With social primary goods, individuals will select Rawls’ two principles of justice because these will allow individuals to achieve their rational plans of life.

## **SECTION 1.1 TWO PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE**

Rawls acknowledges that inequalities are going to exist in society, and the aim of his theory is “to find a principle to regulate these inequalities.”<sup>28</sup> Such principles are going to be chosen by rational individuals in the OP. The original position tries to acknowledge principles, which advance their system of ends as far as possible.<sup>29</sup> In the OP, individuals are going to be presented with a list of principles and Rawls’ assumes that they will choose his two principles of justice. All of this selective process is taking place in the OP behind the veil of ignorance,

These principles primarily apply, to the basic structure of society and govern the assignment of rights and duties and regulate the distribution of social and economic advantages.<sup>30</sup>

In a well-ordered society, after the veil of ignorance is lifted, institutions would be guided by these principles. Therefore, the principles of justice chosen by individuals are the ones that will serve as the foundation for institutions to provide justice. The aim of the principles is to, “specify basic rights and liberties, and to regulate social and economic inequalities in citizen’s

prospects.”<sup>31</sup> Rawls’ two principles of justice are:

1. Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others.
2. Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both:
  - (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle, and
  - (b) attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.<sup>32</sup>

## **SECTION 1.2 COUNTERARGUMENT**

Now that I have briefly discussed a Rawlsian theory of justice let me present one of the counterarguments. Rawls cannot protect individuals who are marginalized such as infants, people with different abilities, and animals. The reason of this is because Rawls makes rationality a fundamental capacity of an individual to choose the two principles of justice. Tracing back to Rene Descartes’ belief that language is a sign of rationality and only “things” endowed with minds or souls are rational.<sup>33</sup> According to Descartes, animals are automata. They only have reflexes to stimuli, but they do not feel.<sup>34</sup> “Animals were mere machines or automata, like clocks, capable of complex behavior, but wholly incapable of speech, reasoning, or, on some interpretations, even sensation.”<sup>35</sup> Descartes created the break between man and the rest of nature. He nominated men as the lords of nature.<sup>36</sup> Rawls accounted his theory of justice in the belief that rationality is a fundamental characteristic of individuals who are going to live under a theory of justice. However, infants and animals have not developed their rationality but still we hope that a theory of justice can give them a place on a theory of justice. We certainly would not want to agree that comatose individuals who lack speech and rationality are not members of a just society. This would be unethical, just by the fact of being a member of a community; individuals are entitled to rights and liberties. Non-human animals (hereafter referred to as



animals), are social species and therefore should be granted some rights and liberties (liberty to live, respect and not violate their freedom). Rawls acknowledges in *Political Liberalism* that there are four problems, (two which are relevant in this paper) that his conception of justice could not (at the time) handle them,

1. What is owed to people with disabilities (both temporary and permanent, both mental and physical)
2. What is owed to animals and the rest of nature.<sup>37</sup>

As Daniel A. Dombrowski notes, Rawls did not provide an account on how to deal with the extraordinary (i.e., marginal) cases.<sup>38</sup> In Rawls' account, the capacity for moral personality is a sufficient condition for being entitled to equal justice.<sup>39</sup> It is clear that some systematically oppressed groups lack moral personality. Rawls argues that animals do not have moral personality, but the extraordinary cases will be protected by a just society because they have the possibility of developing their moral personality.<sup>40</sup> Rawls does tell us that we have a natural duty regarding animals; since they can feel pain; the animal rights argue that we have active and direct obligations to them because they have fundamental rights.<sup>41</sup> It seems that Rawlsian theory protects in some sense the harming of animals. I argue that this is not enough. The act of eating flesh (when other options are available) is not just and goes in contradiction with an individuals' plan of life.

According to Rawls, institutions and social primary goods are going to be key for individuals to achieve their rational plan of life. In a just society the goal is for each citizen to achieve his rational plan of life, "one plan of life which cannot be improved upon; there is no other plan which, taking everything into account, would be preferable."<sup>42</sup> Rawls introduces the theory of the good as a way to characterize primary goods.

In Chapter VII of TJ, “Goodness as Rationality,” Rawls clarifies that the right comes before the good. This means that a person’s good is a person’s rational plan of life. In order for Rawls to ensure that injustices will not arouse from one individual trying to achieve his rational plan of life, he introduces two theories of the good, “in order to ensure that the concept of right is prior to that of the good.”<sup>43</sup> The “thin theory” is presented to secure the importance of social primary goods<sup>44</sup> and “to explicate the notion of rationality underlying the choice of principles in the original position.”<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, the “full theory” of the good is more of a moral theory. Rawls claims that being a good person is a good. He wants to explain “the concept of moral worth and the good of the moral virtues.”<sup>46</sup> The full theory will explain the “good of activities, and in particular the good of everyone’s willing to act from the public conception of justice in affirming their social institutions.”<sup>47</sup> In summation, the thin theory will provide an argument for social primary goods while the full theory will develop a notion of what is it to be “good.” Rawls argues that good is equal to doing the right thing. To be a good person is to be a right person. To enjoy good activities means that they are right, not wrong behaviors.

A rational plan of life of an individual does not involve illness and suffering. Scientific and medical research has shown that meat and dairy consumption increases the chance of getting a disease later in life.<sup>48</sup> Our rational plan of life involves avoiding unhealthy acts at all costs, to live a healthy life and achieve such rational plan of life.

According to Rawls, being good is acting right; by acting right we are good individuals. A moral virtue would be to recognize that sentient beings (regardless of species) deserve equal consideration by moral agents.<sup>49</sup> If some do not want to grant animals a place on a theory of justice because their beliefs are that animals are just not part of the moral spectrum. There is another way of understanding this topic. According to Rawls, one acts upon one’s interests and

self-respect. Rawls assumes that an individual will protect her interests to achieve her rational plan of life. Meaning, whatever she wants to do that is in accordance with others' individual rights and liberties. For instance, it would be irrational for Rose to use cocaine, if the use of cocaine will interfere with her medical studies. If Rose wants to be a doctor, she needs to do everything that is necessary (in accordance with rules and laws) to achieve her rational plan of life. It would seem that Rose will avoid using cocaine or heroin because she knows that this will harm her physically and mentally. Now, if there is scientific data that shows that poultry (cheap factory chicken) provides prime conditions for the amplification and spread of *Campylobacter*, (a major foodborne disease in the UK)<sup>50</sup>, and diseases like SARS,<sup>51</sup> one would avoid getting these diseases at all costs. One can argue that we have been eating chicken and meat for a lifetime; however, the mass production of chickens since post World War II is nothing compare to prior conditions of production. As noted by Allen and Lavau, "You're growing a 3.5-kilo bird in 38 to 39 days, which used to take, even 10 years ago, would have been 5 days longer." The authors argue that disease is relational. It is related with mass production and the food industry to produce more and more in less time:

The imperative from retailers to produce just the right number of birds at the right weight and price point at the right time is, as we shall described in detail later, also part of a relational economic disease. Such commercial pressures are not external to disease. They too may be constitutive of disease. For instance, choreographing a certain dance of encounters between stressed chicken, opportunistic pathogens, feed supplements, noisy machinery, poultry catchers, a daily kill plan, month-old litter and transport crates, a heterogonous assemblage of things in which disease may or may not be produced.<sup>52</sup>

If one is not convinced about the morality of eating animals, one should reconsider the idea. It is not the act of eating, but the quality of food one is consuming. The consumption of meat and poultry dramatically increases the possibility of acquiring diseases and possibly death. One rational plan of life is not death; it is successfully achieving what you want, by trying to preserve

health and finding associations. Why would one want to eat one's death sentence? Whether or not one agrees, a discussion of justice should include animals. There is an argument that one should consider, their rationality and the pursuit of their rational plan of life. It is not impossible to include animals in a conversation of justice. It would allow us to be rational, good and ethical. It should grant us a better perspective of justice or how a just society should look. One of the main arguments against social contract theory is their failure to include infants, extraordinary cases or animals. However, there has been a successful attempt to do this, such as the case of Martha C. Nussbaum. She developed a theory that includes animals in a theory of justice. The following section will analyze Nussbaum's theory for the inclusion of animals in a theory of justice.

### **SECTION 1.3 THE CAPABILITIES APPROACH**

Martha C. Nussbaum, in *Frontiers of Justice*, constructs an argument for elevating two traditionally neglected groups -- physically challenged humans and nonhuman animals -- to full moral status. Using Rawlsian theory, she argues that what is just is to include in the conversation of justice animals and disable individuals. She argues that,

When I say that the mistreatment of animals is unjust, I mean to say not only that is wrong of us to treat them in that way, but also that they have a right, a moral entitlement, not to be treated in that way. It is unfair to them.<sup>53</sup>

She argues that the capabilities approach does, in fact, treat animals as agents seeking a flourishing existence. This being the underlying strength of this approach. Animals have the ability to flourish, ability to communicate in their environment, having families, and being entitled to their existence. The capabilities approach, according to Nussbaum, takes an interest in complex forms of life and functioning such of that of animals. By eating animals and

overexploiting our environment, the capability approach of individuals to flourish in the future is diminishing, as “damage to species occurs through damage to individuals.”<sup>54</sup>

Nussbaum argues that there is a list of capabilities that animals have and are the foundation to understand that animals have entitlements based upon justice,<sup>55</sup>

1. In the capabilities approach, all animals are entitled to continue their lives, whether or not they have such a keen interest, unless and until pain and decrepitude make death no longer a harm.
2. Bodily Health. Animals are entitled to live a healthy life; policies should be enforced in protecting the healthy lives of animals (no circuses, no cruel treatment).
3. Bodily Integrity. Animals have direct entitlement against the violation of their bodily integrity by violence, abuse and other forms of harmful treatment.
4. Sense, imagination and thought. Animals in the wild are entitled to an environment that is the sort in which they characteristically flourish. Animals should be living in big spaces, not in limited space.
5. Emotions. Sentient animals have fear and can become emotionally disturbed through animal experimentation.
6. Practical reason. Animals have practical reason and it ought to be supported by policies.
7. Affiliation. Animals are entitled to opportunities to form attachments and to engage in characteristic forms of bonding and interrelationship. They are entitled to relations with humans. They are entitled to live in a world with public culture that respects them and treats them as dignified beings.
8. Other species. Humans are entitled to being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and the world of nature; animals are too, entitled to live in relation to human beings and species should enjoy cooperative and mutually supportive relations.
9. Play, protection of adequate space, light, and sensory stimulation.
10. Control over One's Environment. Animals should be included in the political discourse of justice; policies should protect them and treat them justly.<sup>56</sup>

With this list of ten capabilities, Nussbaum argues that the capabilities approach is even more efficient than utilitarianism and Rawlsian theory. Her approach includes animals in the realm of justice. If animals are not included in a discussion on justice and left to religious, secular and other cultural views, we will continue to face the problem of human-centered views such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Placing animals on human disposal and overexploitation of the environment will continue a decline of decent and rational life.

Now that I have talked about Rawlsian theory and using Nussbaum capabilities theory, I argue that theories of justice should include a discussion on animal rights. First, it is our rational plan of life and a matter of justice itself to achieve a complete theory of justice that will avoid as many injustices as we can. Second, it is not in our interest to become ill and diseased through the consumption of the food. The industry has been proven to increase the chances of getting sick. Nor is it in our interest to destroy the natural environment on which all life depends. Third, according to Nussbaum, animals have numerous salient capabilities. Thus, should be involved in these discussions on justice as much as their human counterparts. Not until we understand the importance of this argument will we come closer to a just society. There are more similarities between non-human animals and animals than we can often think of. In Jane Goodall's research she observed orphaned wild chimpanzees and described "profound behavioral disturbances, with sadness or depressive affective changes as major components."<sup>57</sup>

However, there are some exceptions to this rule. Hunting-gathering communities, Native American groups have a strong relationship to nature and hunting. People who are not able to afford complex superfoods and are left with no alternative but to buy the cheapest product in the market in order to survive; are exempt from the rule of avoiding animal products. In fact, Native Americans have an intrinsic value for the environment and animals. Whereas, the West or Christian, who take the environment and animals to be instrumental to human beings.

For instance, it may be argued, "What if there is a nomadic group that survives off hunting and fishing? Would they need to starve themselves before eating meat?" The answer is **no**. Native American groups are often believed to have always been hunters and fishers. There are two groups of Native Americans, agricultural societies, and hunting societies. In fact, many of the hunting societies were agricultural but became hunter-gathering societies due to a

European influence and the introduction of the gun.<sup>5859</sup> The Apaches were one of the first groups to be associated with the killing of buffalos, but other Indian groups based their diets solely on corn and other vegetables. The Choctaws, Aztecs, Mayans, Zapotecs and Raramuri's primary food was corn. In the sixteenth century, a Spanish explorer known as Francisco Vázquez de Coronado arrived in Mexico making a switch between a plant-diet into a hunting diet.<sup>60</sup> With the multiplication of horses and the introduction of the gun, killing an animal was much easier than hunting it with a bow and arrow. Furthermore, Choctaw and Cherokee writer Rita Laws argued that,

The Apaches were joined by other tribes, such as the Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapahos, Comanches, and Kiowas. These tribes lost the corn, gave up agriculture, and started living nomadic existences for the first time. It wasn't long before their food, clothing, and shelter were entirely dependent on one animal, the buffalo.

Let's not idealize Native Americans as protectors of the environment. The hunting societies can be "blamed" to some extent for the extinction of larger mammals<sup>61</sup> such as the killing of the buffalo. However, both groups still look at the environment as sacred and conservationist in the following sense,

He does not waste or 'despoil, exhaust or extinguish,' and [he] leaves the environment and resources like animal populations in a usable state for succeeding generations.<sup>62</sup>

Native Americans hunting style was nothing compared to the slaughterhouses in today's world. Native Americans took hunting as a mutual relationship between the hunter and the hunted, "the act of hunting itself involves a reciprocal obligation for hunters to provide the conditions in which animals can grow and survive on the earth."<sup>63</sup> The clearer differences between Native American hunters and today's slaughterhouses is the animistic view Indians have,

Every stream, every tree, every mountain contained a guardian spirit who had to be carefully propitiated before one put a mill in a stream, or cut the tree, or mined the mountain.<sup>64</sup>

Today, nature has been demystified; we exploit and take advantage of nature, the environment and everything the human individual can use as a tool for ones own benefit to take advantage over other species. Now that I have discussed Native Americans' hunting style and their intrinsic relationship to the environment and animals, it can be argued, when nomadic societies are exposed to starvation, they are justified in hunting, as long as they preserve their animistic relationship to animals.

Before moving forward to Chapter 2, I will like to acknowledge at least one problem with my theory. I am offering an alternative argument to illustrate the impact of processed animal products in one's life. First, if Suzy does not feel empathy towards animals and thinks that animals are there to serve a purpose, then we move to alternative number two. Suzy cares about herself, and she lives in an environment that is incrementally extinguishing due to global warming. A study conducted by Carlsson and Gonzalez, researched the original source for carbon dioxide in meat and vegetables:

Anthropogenic warming is caused mainly by emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs), such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, with agriculture as a main contributor for the latter 2 gases.<sup>65</sup>... Current food consumption patterns in the developed countries exceed the level of sustainability by at least a factor of 4. Prospects for achieving sustainable food consumption patterns are questionable.<sup>66</sup>

They concluded that there is an interesting and unexplored area towards mitigating change in global warming. Research has found that we can decrease carbon dioxide production by declining meat consumption.<sup>67</sup> If one is not concerned about the well being of animals or empathy towards them, one should be concerned about the environment in which she lives.



Daughter of the Earth, she ought to protect her home. Without her home, she ceases to exist. However, there are individuals that think global warming is not happening. There is still a third alternative to worrying about animal product consumption. Suzy should worry about her health. Research has also shown that consuming animal products lead to an increase of diseases. This last alternative will create criticism from my readers. One can argue that a vegetarian/vegan meal lacks the nutrients one needs to sustain life. For instance, vitamin B-12 is only found in meat, fish, chicken and dairy products. It is also required to control blood levels and prevent anemia. There are Vitamin B-12 supplements that are made in laboratories. It is not necessary to ingest meat products to get B-12. Ingesting vitamins in the form of pills may bring its argument to the table: is it healthy? This is beyond the scope of this paper. I want to argue that with the proper knowledge and resources, one can be healthy if her meal is based on vegetables and other protein sources.

In the next chapter, I will continue to discuss theories of oppression. Oppression has been part of feminist theory, but also pertains to a theory of justice. We will see that non-violence, freedom, rights and liberties are fundamental to a non-oppressive environment and therefore elements a theory of justice. Justice should guarantee liberty and freedom, rights and opportunities to create a well-ordered society in which individuals (humans and animals) can flourish according to their respective needs and wants.

## CHAPTER 2. FEMINIST THEORIES

The root word of “oppression” is “press” and presses are used to mold things or flatten them or reduce them in bulk. It can also reduce them by squeezing out the gasses or liquids.<sup>68</sup> To be pressed is to be caught among forces that restrain and restrict the thing’s motion. To be pressed is to be molded, immobilized or reduced. Feminist theorists, such as Marilyn Frye, have talked about oppression regarding human beings (human animals). The definition that Frye provides of oppression fits into non-human animals oppression. To be oppressed is to experience “being caged in: all avenues, in every direction, are blocked or booby-trapped.”<sup>69</sup> Animals are caught among forces that restrict their mobility; trapped in cages. Animals are “surrounded by a network of systematically related barriers, and are confined as the solid walls of a dungeon.”<sup>70</sup> In the case of animal oppression, the network of barriers that systematically oppresses them can be labeled and related to capitalism, convenience, exploitation, marginalization, false superiority, false dualism, and ignorance.

In the case of women’s oppression, men are the ones that benefit from the services (personal, sexual or ego) of women. The so-called superiority of “men” is a way of protecting their classification and status as a male, as superior.<sup>71</sup> In the case of animal oppression, both women and men maintain the barriers and forces. People of both genders who eat animals, and torture, have the false belief that animals serve a personal service for humanity.

Frye makes an important distinction when talking about oppression. She argues women are oppressed as women. Black women are oppressed both by race and gender. Men can sometimes be oppressed as a black man or Latino man but never as men. Being a male is not an oppressive status, being a black man, maybe, because the element of race is added. Animals are oppressed as non-human animals, because their so-called lack of communication, rationality,

social group, and abilities, makes them a perfect target for the oppressors to take advantage. They press them into the force of capitalism and exploitation. Animals are oppressed as animals.

In her essay *In and Out of Harm's Way*, Frye recalls the definition of oppression. As being a systematic network of forces and barriers, which tends to the reduction, immobilization, and molding of the oppressed.<sup>72</sup> She comes forward to argue that each individual's interests should suit each person, not anyone else's. However, she falsely believes that human beings and NOT animals are the only ones capable of self-respect, righteousness and resentment. First of all, the definition of self-respect is metaphysical. This deserves special consideration when arguing that this is a fundamental demarcation criterion from humans and animals. Second, animals have shown to be intelligent, sentient beings that can plan and execute actions.

Intelligence and thought processes can assume any forms, not all of which follow textbook defined rules of inductive and deductive reasoning; similarly, communication can transpire through sounds, expressions gestures, and behaviors, and meaning is not transmitted only by following the conventions of human syntax, although monkeys seem to understand basic rules of grammar.<sup>73</sup>

The false argument that animals cannot execute actions, or they do not have language, has turned out to be false. Modern ethology has been progressive and liberating.<sup>74</sup>

## **SECTION 2.1 FIVE FACES OF OPPRESSION IN THE ANIMAL REALM**

While Frye talks about oppression as the multiple forces coming to press an individual or drawing into a birdcage, in which one is confined, Iris Young describes five faces of oppression. Five elements that constitute oppression. While all oppressed people face a common condition,<sup>75</sup> oppression to each group differs and has specific features. Furthermore, Young argues that,

Oppression refers to the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often-unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions, medial and cultural stereotypes and structural features of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanisms.<sup>76</sup>

The unconscious assumptions that human beings have about animals have taken their lives in the most inhumane form. The assumption that animals do not think or they serve our personal purposes has led the capitalist food industry to gain billions each year. The assumption that our ancestors ate meat and therefore, constitutes our regular diet leads to diseases that kill human beings each day. Not to mention the increased obesity rate in the United States. The five faces of oppression that Young argues are exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence.

To begin with exploitation, Young draws into a Marxist theory of exploitation in which class domination is core. Exploitation enacts a structural relation between social groups.<sup>77</sup> Men can enact their power, freedom and self-realization through the subordination of women. One of the fundamental cores of Marxism theory of oppression is the social relation that occurs between the oppressed and the oppressors. At least one group needs to benefit from the labor of other groups. For instances, in the food industry, the capitalistic system and market in which we live benefits from the mass production of animals for the consumption of the American market.

Her theory of marginalization, describes [the history of animals has been marginalized from the language we use in history] how we haven't been able to locate and talk about animals in the same spectrum as other human issues and problems. We need to challenge humanism to avoid the marginalization of animals. Humanism argues that human dignity and values predominate,<sup>78</sup> which leads to the marginalization of other species.

Powerlessness, the third face of oppression, may be seen as the clearest for animals (non-human animals) than for any other being. Young argues that,

The powerless are those who lack authority or power even in this mediated sense, those over whom power is exercised without their exercising it; the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them.<sup>79</sup>

Nonhuman animals are the most powerless of animal species. The fact that they cannot verbally communicate (using our human language) with other human beings, make them the subject of horrible acts against their bodies. Animals do not have a human voice to fight or express their feelings, thoughts and rights (at least over their freedom). If animals do not have such a voice, we are required to speak up for them, to give a voice to the powerless.

The fourth face of oppression is cultural imperialism. At first this does not fit any description of animal oppression. Cultural imperialism can be defined as the idea of the dominant cultural product of a society. In the American culture, this cultural ideology is to eat meat, chicken, and fish, to hunt and collect “trophies.”

Cultural imperialism involves the universalization of a dominant group’s experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm.<sup>80</sup>

In the United States, this established norm is hunting and eating animal products. When someone comes in and says, “I am a vegan” the immediate reaction is, “Oh, she is a hippie.” Or, “So you really do not eat meat? Why? I would never stop eating a delicious steak.” Cultural imperialism is an ignorant way to justify ones own choices and irrational decisions. Our culture accepts animal oppression and finds nothing ethically disturbing about the exploitation of animals. We have institutionalized such oppression. Our language is structured to accept this oppression.<sup>81</sup>

The Christian religion urges to see animals as inferior because of our supposed human rationality that is further beyond an animal’s rationality; which we know is false. In Genesis 1:26, God instructs us that we may dominate the animals, to have power over them, which through Western history is validated by the alleged uniqueness of human rationality. This cultural imperialism makes us follow the unethical pattern of eating meat and continue supporting the patriarchal society in which we live. We do not realize that a first step towards ending and liberating females from oppression is acknowledging our role in meat consumption. This will be further discussed

in the next chapter.

Finally, violence is the fifth face of oppression. For Young, the existence of violence, as a social practice, is what makes violence a phenomenon of social injustice.<sup>82</sup> It is systemic because it is directed to members of a particular group, such as Latino, African American, Gays and Lesbians, Non-human Animals. As Young recognizes, violence is a social practice. We clearly see it on slaughterhouses where animals are slaughtered violently without any regard to how animals think and feel.

In sum, Young argues that the presence of any of these five conditions is sufficient for calling a group oppressed.<sup>83</sup> These five faces of oppression fit the current situation that we have with animals. The capitalist animal industry exploits and marginalizes powerless creatures because of an alleged cultural imperialism that tells us to eat meat (through a violent process of slaughterhouses).

## **SECTION 2.2 THE SEXUAL POLITICS OF MEAT**

The topic of animal oppression, this new axis of oppression that I am introducing to a feminist, political and ethical theory has been dealt significantly before. First, we can see the act of eating meat has been oppressive, sexist and racist. Who would have imagined this? In *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Carol J. Adams established a well-founded background on the sexist act of meat consumption, tracing it back to a ‘macho’ behavior found in different societies all around the world.

Adams argues that dietary habits proclaim class and patriarchal distinctions,

The sexism in meat eating recapitulates the class distinctions with an added twist: a mythology permeates all classes that meat is a masculine food and meat eating a male activity.<sup>84</sup>

Patriarchal distinctions among meat consumption can be traced back to different cultures. Adams recalls that in Asia, some cultures forbid women from consuming fish, seafood, chicken, duck and eggs. In equatorial Africa, the prohibition of chicken to women was common. The Walamo put anyone to death who violated the restriction of eating fowl.<sup>85</sup> The systematic oppression that women have faced over the years has not been only in jobs and life opportunities, but also what they **ought** not to eat. Over the years, especially in England women used to save meat for their husbands because of the false belief those men need meat and they were the breadwinners. During World War II, the “beef madness” began. This is when richly fattened beef was force-fed into every putative American warrior.”<sup>86</sup> The United States has always had a more meat supplies than others. Meat characterizes the diet of Americans; this characterization is a symbol of male power and an index of racism.<sup>87</sup> George Beard, a medical doctor from the nineteenth century, argued that “brain-workers” needed and were required to eat lean meat as their main meal, but “the savage” or the “lower” class of society could learn to live on coarser foods.<sup>88</sup> Meat is a male food. It is a symbol of male dominance, power, and strength.<sup>89</sup> The mythology of patriarchal culture shows that meat promotes strength. These attributes of masculinity are achieved through eating masculine foods.<sup>90</sup> First class protein is considered to be meat. Second-class protein is deemed to be vegetables and grains and is associated with second-class citizens, women and minorities.<sup>91</sup> We have learned that vegetables are in fact more than that of a first class good because they provide more vitamins and minerals than meat. Why are we still thinking that meat is king (male power denotation)? In fact, Adams argues that male vegetarians challenge an essential part of the masculine role because they are opting for a women’s food. She states, “refusing meat means a man is effeminate, a “sissy,” a “fruit.”<sup>92</sup>

In Chapter Two, “The Rape of Animals, the Butchering of Women”, Carol Adams established the need for a theory that traces parallel trajectories, the oppressions of women and animals, and the problems of objectification, fragmentation, and consumption.<sup>93</sup> For instance, she states that objectification permits an oppressor to view another being as an object. The oppressor then violates this being by object-like treatment.<sup>94</sup> Imagine Nazi Germany when Hitler believed that all Jews were inferior, and the objectification began, they became objects of labor. Another case that relates to the Nazi objectification of humans is the butchering of animals. Butchering is a process of identifying the animal, objectifying it, and the essence of the animal ceasing to exist. It is now an object for consumption, a commodity, something one wants and desires. The fragmentation or brutal dismemberment is the second phase of the oppressive process. Jews were fragmentized (broken into separate parts) first by being separated from their families, second and finally put in gas chambers or massive shootings. The case with animals seems obvious; we dismember animals into pieces that are sold in restaurants and supermarkets. “These delicious Cajun spicy boneless chicken or I would like a medium-rare Sirloin, or Mexican tongue tacos are delicious!” Do we realize that when we eat boneless chicken, or beef, they were once a part of a whole? A body whole that was a living being? “Through fragmentation the object is severed from its ontological meaning.”<sup>95</sup> The ontological significance of a body begins to fade apart when one becomes objectified. But when one is fragmentized from anything else that matters, the ontological meaning is lost. Finally, consumption, “reiterates its annihilation as a subject of importance in itself.”<sup>96</sup> The living cow that had veils and once was living on a farm is now your medium-rare sirloin steak you are eating while drinking a glass of wine. Or the 21 female bodies found in Juarez, Mexico<sup>97</sup> discarded in a dry stream bed used to



have an ontological meaning, they were someone's daughter or sister. They were living beings that matter but they became nothing but bodies that were probably raped, oppressed and beat up.

## **SECTION 2.3 MALE-CENTERED LANGUAGE AND MARGINALIZATION**

In Section 2.2, I discussed Young's *Five Faces of Oppression* in which human oppression of nonhuman animals fits well. I discovered an overlap between the marginalization face of oppression and Carol Adams' chapter on "Masked Violence, Muted Voices" in where she argues, "not only our language is male-centered, it is human-centered as well."<sup>98</sup> At the beginning of this chapter, I established that I would use the phrase "non-human animals" to clarify that human beings are animals as well. Adams states,

All that is implied when the words animal and beast are used as insults maintains separation between human animals and nonhuman animals. We have structured our language to avoid the acknowledgment of our biological similarity.<sup>99</sup>

When we call a horse, dog, or cat we often use the pronoun "it" not she or him. This functions for nonhuman animals while he or she works for human beings. Adams uses "she" to refer to any animal, alive or dead whose sex is unknown.

Through the use of language, we have come to objectify and marginalize animals from being a living being into being an object of consumption. This is something that is on one's plate for you to serve one's palate. Emarel Freshel argues that "if the words which tell the truth about meat as food are unfit for our ears, the meat itself is not fit for our mouths" (1908). Let's recall the example of us having a delicious pack of boneless meat during a football game, or a medium rare sirloin. We do not talk about eating a calf or drinking cow's milk that is full of germs and bacteria that belonged to the calf. We do not talk about drinking female production of milk that was supposed to go to her baby because it sounds disgusting and in fact it is. However, we certainly drink cow's milk even though it does not belong to us. The language that we use shapes

our reality. When we talk about sirloin, steak, we think of a macho man eating a macho enhancing food that alters his masculinity. We do not talk about the butchering of the animal, the dismembering of the cow.

What if we talk about our food in a different language? For instance,

We see ourselves eating pork chops, hamburgers, sirloins, and so on, rather than 43 pigs, 3 lambs, 11 cows, 4 “Veal” calves, 2, 555 chickens and turkeys, and 861 fishes that the average American eats in a lifetime.<sup>100</sup>

Oppression of animals or animal oppression can be seen in its application of force. Simone

Weil’s definition of force “it is that x that turns anybody who is subjected to it into a thing”

(1970). Adams makes the following comparison;

Meat eating is to animals what white racism is to people of color, anti-Semitism is to Jewish people, homophobia is to gay men and lesbian and woman hating is to women. All are oppressed by a culture that does not want to assimilate them fully on their grounds and with rights.<sup>101</sup>

Undoubtedly, meat eating is a form of oppression just like sexism or racism. We kill, consume, butcher, and enjoy a delicious piece of tongue while forgetting where it comes from. She (animal) ceases to be she when it is presented as a piece of meat on our plate. However, there is an important difference between these groups that have been oppressed (gay men, lesbians, Jewish, Mexicans, women, men, etc.) the difference is verbal communication happens between these groups. Mexican women can communicate with other groups that face the same oppression as we do. Animals cannot communicate (in human language) to us their pain and suffering. They cannot create and unite and form a revolutionist movement because we do not understand their language. We understand they suffer, but that is not enough for many. They cannot join together to protect themselves, but we can. It is our absolute duty to begin with the voiceless oppressed than to forget about them.

Interestingly enough, Adams argues that we oppress animals by associating them with women's lesser status.<sup>102</sup> I think we oppress animals by virtue of being animals. This is not because we associate with women (which as we have seen, we do), but rather because they are animals, "nothing else, just animals." Adams argues that a form of oppression is meat consumption. While I agree that when we consume meat we are oppressors (excluding the cases of poor individuals or nomadic societies). We should be talking about animal oppression in the realm of justice and politics. Individual change is required. Institutional change that grants animals freedom to their bodies is mandated if we want to see a real revolution in the animal ethics and rights realm.

## **SECTION 2.4 OVERLAPPING OF OPPRESSION**

Oppression in the human realm, feminist philosophers have argued, occurs in response to different social identities: color, race, gender, sexual orientation, origin, place of birth, abilities, work, language, religion and so on. Cheshire Calhoun in *Feminism, the Family, and the Politics of the Closet* has shown that different social groups are oppressed in unique ways.<sup>103</sup> She calls these unique ways, in which people are oppressed, "axis of oppression" which, according to Calhoun, means:

Oppression and subordination refer to social systems. One cannot claim to be oppressed simply because one is treated in a disadvantaging unequal way in a particular sphere of human activity. Oppression and subordination depend on the cultural articulation of basic social identities that are taken to be:

- (a) relatively or completely immutable features of persons,
- (b) determinative of their psychological, moral, physical and intellectual capacities, and
- (c) in polar opposition to an Other identity where polarity of evaluation (good-bad, respectable-unrespectable, superior-inferior, natural-unnatural) is central.<sup>104</sup>

As Calhoun states, one can be oppressed because of three factors a, b and c. Factor "A" talks about immutable features. An immutable feature that has been used as a basis of oppression

is color, race, gender, and sexual orientation. In this case the immutable feature is being a non-human being. People have argued over the years that it is morally and ethically correct to eat animals because they do not have the same psychological, moral and intellectual capacities as humans.<sup>105</sup> This is characteristic “B.” However, a problem arises, this problem is known as the problem of marginal cases. Kids and physically challenged individuals, in most cases, do not have, the same capacities as someone who is grown up with all the faculties in order. Do we, therefore, reject that they can be treated like other humans because of this? No, and this is the reason why another axis of oppression belongs to individuals who are disabled. Finally, characteristic “C” refers to the polar opposition, the *Other* identity. This case is the one that fits more of purpose showing how animal oppression exists. It is the superior-inferior model. We feel superior to animals, so we kill them because we know that much of the time we are stronger than they. They cannot defend, yell, call the police or speak up for themselves. They are inferior to us. This characteristic fits what Calhoun says to be the basic social identities. Identities that are subject to oppression by the so-called respectable, good, superior, natural, and able individual.

We can see that animal oppression is not only about oppression but also about exploitation.

Exploitation occurs when one section of the population produces a surplus whose use is controlled by another section...Under capitalism, exploitation takes the form of the extraction of surplus value by the class of industrial capitalists from the working class, but other exploiting classes or class fractions share in the distribution of surplus value.... Capitalism differs from non-capitalist modes of production [such as feudalism or slavery] in that exploitation normally takes place without the direct intervention of force or non-economic processes.<sup>106</sup>

Although centuries ago, the emerging modern meat industry was dominated by local farmers which were distributed to nearby towns and cities. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the meat industry is mainly comprised by four companies (Tyson, JBS, Cargill, National Beef): “About 35 million

cattle are slaughtered in the U.S. annually by 60 major beef-packing operations processing around 26 billion pounds of beef. Four firms control over 80 percent of all the beef slaughtered.”<sup>107</sup> Local farmers have been pushed out of the market by becoming employees of these four companies who have the control of all the meat industry. There is no more revenues for what was before seen as farmers of small farms. Now, animals are packed together in huge houses with small space within them. The conditions of such animals are inhumane; animals have been bigger in size because of growing global consumer demand.

Feminist philosophers working on animal ethics have thought about how human and non-human oppressions overlap. For instance, Greta Gaard in her essay, “Vegetarian Ecofeminism: A Review Essay,” argues that some ecofeminists have emphasized the oppression of nonhuman animals based on the idea of speciesism (another axis of oppression just like racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism and naturism).<sup>108</sup> Gaard argues that through the power of sympathy, individuals can come to an understanding and acknowledgment of the enormity of animal suffering. Brian Luke comments on that and adds that,

Human sympathies for nonhumans are managed and undermined through the belief in human supremacy; through the systematic denigration of non humans; through the propaganda promulgated by the animal industrial complex, the scientific establishment, and the hunting industry; through the active denial of animals subjectivity and their social construction as willing victims; and finally, through the derogation of sympathy itself, typically done in gender-specific ways.<sup>109</sup>

Ecofeminists have argued that sympathy exists between human and nonhuman animals in a more direct and precise way than what we often think. For instance, Gaard uses the example of rape and domestic violence in comparison to being treated as a ‘piece of meat’.

Furthermore, the second wave of feminism presented the linguistic association of humans with animals as a method of demeaning minorities.<sup>110</sup> For instance, second wave feminists point out that derogatory terms for women are: “sow,” “bitch,” “pussy,” “chick,” “cow,” “old bat,” and “bird-brain.” In addition, Carol Adams acknowledged the phenomenological experience of being hunted or being a “prey” of someone else. “People of color, women, gays and lesbians all know the experience of being hunted, of being “prey” in Western culture. Some ecofeminists have even experienced being prey for other nonhuman animals.”<sup>111</sup> Human and nonhuman animals have experienced being “hunted” by the oppressor. For nonhuman animals, humans would be presented as the oppressors. For humans, the oppressor can be anyone who exercises an excessive amount of power that oppresses the individual’s wills and rights.

This work is done by feminist philosophers working on the overlapping of human and non-human animal oppressions is certainly important. However, these philosophers have never explored what animal oppression looks like on its own terms, as an axis of oppression. Ecofeminists have explored how animal oppression as a form of speciesism, not as a form of animal oppression. Animal oppression should have its own axis. I argue that animal oppression goes beyond a form of speciesism but deserves to be explored in its own as a form of oppression: animal oppression. Just like animal ethicists, feminists have failed in acknowledging the axis of oppression that is animal oppression.<sup>112</sup> One of the problems that may arise when presenting and proposing a specific theory of animal oppression is, exclusively “specific” theories block understanding of commonalities in theory and alliance politics in practice. To avoid this consequence, I need to provide a solution for this. A section should be devoted to this consequence.

In the next chapter, I am going to explore a general history of animal ethics, as well as some main contrasting positions within this tradition.

### CHAPTER 3. ANIMAL OPPRESSION, NOT SPECIESISM

“The time has come for a revolution in our attitudes, attitudes which can and must change because there has been a huge and rapid shift in power.” (Richard D. Ryder)

Animal rights, animal welfare, and animal ethics have been a topic of debate for a very long time. As discussed before, it is not only ethics that has discussed animal rights. Different religions and philosophies around the world have diverse views on the topic also. In this chapter, my aim is to provide an overall background on the debate, beginning with Richard D. Ryder’s work on *Animal Revolution*, up to contemporary philosophers Peter Singer, Tom Regan, and Steven Best’s work on the topic. I will try to explain how they approach the subject as opposed to what I am going to be proposing in chapter four this being, animal oppression is significantly different from speciesism.

#### SECTION 3.1 SPECIESISM

As mentioned in chapter one, a theory of justice must include a discussion on animal rights. It is not enough for one to care, in order to change our attitudes towards animals. As Ryder established;

A revolution, to be a revolution, does not merely entail a total change of attitude; it must affect aspects of the human condition which are fundamental.<sup>113</sup>

While there has been an increase in animal rights debate and activism, we live in a paradoxical world. One who cares about animals but not enough to make a fundamental change in our attitudes. While human population explosion has greater demands upon habitat, expanding worldwide industry has destroyed wildlife and science and agricultural technology have devised new means of oppression and justified all by results.<sup>114</sup> Ryder discusses the modern history of animal rights movement. Tracing back to Brigid Brophy’s *The Rights of Animals* in 1965 up to



the creation of academic journals that discuss the moral status of animals such as *Inquiry*, *Ethics*, *Philosophy*, *Etyka*. Most of these philosophers (Richard Ryder, Brigid Brophy, Peter Singer, Stephen Clark, Andrew Linzey, John Harris, Stanley, Roslind Godlovitch)<sup>115</sup> established their moral argument to be,

Our moral argument is that species alone is not a valid criterion for cruel discrimination. Like race or sex, species denotes some physical and other differences but in no way does it nullify the great similarity among all sentients- our capacity for suffering. Where it is wrong to inflict pain upon a human animal it is probably wrong to do so to a nonhuman sentient. The actual killing of a nonhuman animal may also be wrong if it causes suffering or, more contentiously, if it deprives the nonhuman of future pleasures. The logic is very simple.<sup>116</sup>

The power that we employ over animals is an element for the exploitation to them. We have complete power over animals and therefore, we think they pertain to our desires and needs.

However, our power does not justify exploitation just like it did not justify the persecution of Jews.<sup>117</sup> The importance noted by Ryder on an attack against speciesism is, if we persist on the total subordination of non-humans, we are not paving the way for a more callous attitude towards the weak.<sup>118</sup> Certainly, we, as moral agents, want to pave an ethical way for the weak (children, physically challenged or non-humans). We would like to create conditions so they can flourish within their own limitations, we would like for them to experience the conditions of a just society. If we fail to recognize this, we are moving farther away from a moral ethical world.

While Ryder was the father of the term “speciesism” we have seen that contemporary philosopher Peter Singer has based his moral doctrine for animal rights on a critique of speciesism. Singer focuses on the principle of equality. This should be extended to all beings, black or white, masculine or feminine, human or nonhuman.<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, Singer tackles an issue on the similarities between speciesists, racists, and oppressors. He argues that,

Racists violates the principle of equality by giving greater weight to the interests of members of their own race when there is a clash between their interests and the interests

of those of another race. Speciesists allow the interests of their own species to override the greater interests of members of other species. The pattern is identical in each case.<sup>120</sup>

As human beings, we believe that we are morally superior to non-human beings. We falsely justify that they do not have interests or that they cannot communicate. Religion has played a role, more importantly in the Judeo-Christian tradition. They believe animals serve a purpose to human beings and therefore we can dispose of them as we wish. Singer argues that the most grotesque form of justifying speciesism is the claim against sentient beings formulated by Rene Descartes. How do we know what animals feel? According to Descartes, animals are automata. They only have reflexes to stimuli, but they do not feel.<sup>121</sup> “Animals were mere machines or automata, like clocks, capable of complex behavior, but wholly incapable of speech, reasoning, or, on some interpretations, even sensation.”<sup>122</sup> Descartes created the break between man and the rest of nature. He nominated men as the lords of nature.<sup>123</sup> Singer introduces research from Jane Goodall where she shows “when it comes to the expression of feelings and emotions language is less important than nonlinguistic modes of communication.” Animals cannot verbally communicate, “I am in pain” but we can see through their behavior and sounds. The automata argument by Descartes fails to show why we should not consider animals in our moral spectrum.

### **SECTION 3.2 HISTORY OF MAN’S DOMINION OVER ANIMALS**

The Judeo-Christian traditions endorse the notion that the world had been created for the sake of human species.<sup>124</sup> Not only religion but intellectuals and Greek philosophers support this view. From Aristotle’s Great Chain of Being which stated that the Greeks ranked higher than non-Greeks, women, slaves and animals.<sup>125</sup> To Cicero, Aquinas, Francis Bacon, Descartes, William Bingley, Charles Darwin and Ernst Haeckel. The latter, Haeckel, not only had a strong influence on the view of animals as inferior to humans but also a strong influence on Nazi

ideology. “He maintained that since non-European races are psychologically nearer to the mammals than to civilized Europeans, we must, therefore, assign a totally different value to their lives.”<sup>126</sup>

Humans have been treated like animals. There has been a strong effort on the separation between humans and animals. While some believe it to be true, there are still individuals who think and argue that we are sentient beings that deserve equal consideration. Oppression has been a huge issue in history, not only slavery and the Nazi regime but human experimentation as well. We are human and animal oppressors, the oppressive methods used back in Nazi Germany, were used in animal laboratories. This is what we know as blatant racism and blatant speciesism.

### **SECTION 3.3 BLATANT RACISM AND BLATANT SPECIESISM**

There is an interesting but yet terrifying link between animal experimentation and human experimentation tracing back to Nazi Germany. While speciesists today mainly believe that human life is more sacred than that of animals. We have not always thought like that. Blatant racism has led to painful experiments on other races. Depending on the grounds of their contribution to knowledge and possible usefulness of the experimenting race.<sup>127</sup> While Nazi German doctors tested in Russian, Jews, and Polish prisoners, we undergo experiments on animals all around the world with the false belief that we are contributing to the sciences through inflicting unnecessary pain in animals.

Then, as now, subjects were frozen, heated, and put in decompression chambers. Then, as now, these events were written up in dispassionate scientific jargon.<sup>128</sup>

There is no justification on the experimentation on human beings; it has not only been Nazi Germany but the United States, and New Zealand has a history of human experimentation. As Singer argues, since a speciesist bias, like a racist bias, is unjustifiable an experiment cannot be

justifiable unless the experiment is so important that the use of a brain-damaged human would also be justifiable.<sup>129</sup>

Charles Patterson in his book *Eternal Treblinka* discusses the history of the false human superiority belief in his discussion of human megalomania,

In the course of his development towards culture man acquired a dominating position over his fellow-creatures in the animal kingdom...He denied the possession of reason to them, and to himself he attributed an immortal soul, and made claims to a divine descent which permitted him to annihilate the bond of community between him and the animal kingdom.<sup>130</sup>

Different false assumptions of the so-called human superiority over animals have caused not only oppression against animals but also women and other minorities. According to Elizabeth Fisher, the domestication of animals was the foundation for the sexual subjugation of women,

The domestication of women followed the initiation of animal keeping and it was then that men began to control women's reproductive capacity, enforcing chastity and sexual repression.<sup>131</sup>

Men's sexual domination of women created the level of oppression in this patriarchal society; men learned their role from domesticating animals; the Agricultural Revolution used animals as a key stepping stone from the Stone Age to civilization. Furthermore, Patterson argues that in slave societies, practices used to control animals were used to control slaves- castration, branding, whipping, chaining and ear cropping.<sup>132</sup> There was a time in history in which we did the same that we are doing right now to animals but humans, and it was the norm. Now that we step down and think about these practices, they are horrifying, but we still apply them to animals because of this speciesist belief that they are subordinates of the human race.

### **SECTION 3.4 RACISM, EXPLOITATION, SLAVERY AND ANIMAL RIGHTS**

Exploitation, racism, capitalism, slavery and animal rights are interconnected with one another. Racism tore apart families in order to profit from slaves; capitalism has led to an

increase of animal products in the industries. The high demand for meat and poultry has led the factory farming industry to exploit and use the same practices that were used during the Nazi regime. Steven Best notes in “The New Abolitionism: Capitalism, Slavery, and Animal Liberation,” Great Britain constructed racist ideologies “to legitimize the violent subjugation of those equal to them in the eyes of God and the principles of natural law” (29). Slaves were ripped apart from their families, their identity, dignity, respect and human statuses.

Just like in the US slavery market, a human was declared naturally inferior (by skin color) and therefore, “transmogrified from a human subject into a physical object, from a person into a commodity” (31). In today’s world, we treat animals as a commodity; we eat them as a “We are going to celebrate with a delicious steak.” As if it is our right to stripped them of their right to live.

Different movements have aroused from vegetarians, vegans, feminists, and animal rights advocates. Such movements represent and argue for diverse approaches to gain equality between non-human animals and human beings. For instance,

The animal welfare approach seeks to regulate animal suffering in systems of exploitation, the animal rights outlook aims to eliminate these institutions altogether, the animal liberation orientation uses direct action in defiance of the law, to free animals from captivity and to attack exploiters through various means, including economic sabotage.<sup>133</sup>

Whether one group or the other accomplishes their goal or not, or which movement is most efficient is not within the scope of this paper. I agree that some approaches are better to solve the problem of speciesism. However, the aim of this thesis is not to understand and share the understanding and awareness of speciesism but to acknowledge that what we know as speciesism is better coined as animal oppression. By understanding our behavior towards animals as oppression, as being the oppressors of the oppressed and at the same time being

oppressed, we can understand and clarify that for us to stop being oppressed, we need to stop oppressing. In the following section of this paper, I will talk about Paulo Freire's oppression theory and how it suits to our current situation on our behavior towards animals.

### **SECTION 3.5 ANIMAL WELFARE VS. ANIMAL RIGHTS**

Animal Welfare theories accept that animals have interests but these interests can be traded away for the human benefit. On the other hand, animal liberation theories argue that animals have fundamental rights that cannot be violated under any circumstances. As Steve Best stated in "Animal Rights and the New Enlightenment",

The argument for animal rights states that if humans have rights, animals have rights for the same reasons. Moral significance lies not in our differences as species but rather our commonalities as subjects of a life.<sup>134</sup>

Animal rights theories does not allow humans to violate the rights of other species. Philosopher Peter Singer can be identify as an animal welfarist. On the opposite hand, we have Tom Regan who is an animal rights theorist. Regan argues that animals have intrinsic value and therefore should be respected under all circumstances,

The philosophy of animal rights demands this same answer — abolition — in response to the unjust exploitation of other animals. It is not the details of unjust exploitation that must be changed. It is the unjust exploitation itself that must be ended, whether on the farm, in the lab, or among the wild, for example.<sup>135</sup>

It is important to recognize the difference between these two views on animal rights and welfare theories. Under my own theory of animal oppression I allow for extraordinary cases in which individuals are morally justified to consume animal products. This means that my theory falls under the animal welfare theories. I argue that it is fundamental to acknowledge that I am aiming at an animal rights approach. With a theory of justice, different groups will have access to the same opportunities and therefore, will be able to substitute their animal products with non-animal

products. However, the first step is to acknowledge that only these groups are exempt from the rule. The second step will be providing the fundamental basis of a just society that will eventually eliminate animal product consumption.

### **SECTION 3.6 UNDERSTANDING OPPRESSION**

Through his personal experience, Paulo Freire came to reconcile a theory of oppression on why, who and how people become the oppressors and the oppressed. Freire argued that the liberation of the oppressed is possible; and for this to happen, the liberators need to become radicalized,

An increased commitment to the position one has chosen, and thus ever greater engagement in the effort to transform concrete, objective reality.<sup>136</sup>

Paulo Freire's contribution to human liberation keeps alive our hope and understanding of humanity; it allows us to think of a future in which the dichotomy of the oppressor and oppressed will look different. Freire's work emphasizes on men and women, children and laborers, scholars, politicians: human beings. Few are mentioned in the role of non-human beings: animals. In the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire offers an examination of the history of the oppressed and the oppressor, often reminding us that the oppressed will become the oppressor due to a lack of self-affirmation,

But almost always, during the initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors. The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped. Their ideal is to be men; but for them, to be men is to be oppressors.<sup>137</sup>

The oppressed come to internalize the image of the oppression, they are fearful of freedom, but it is important to recognize that such freedom is "acquired by conquest, not by gift."<sup>138</sup> Freire understood the inconsistency of the oppressed becoming the oppressor and he

argued that through the implementation of the problem-posing concept of education, one could achieve liberation. We have come to be the oppressors by diminishing and taking away any humane mode of living from animals in the slaughterhouses; animals should be included in theories of oppression because not until we do so, a clear understanding will come. I will not be arguing that a vegetarian diet should be the only way in which we cease to be the oppressors but the aim is mainly the acknowledgment that, the oppressed members of society who deny rights to animals, at least the freedom to live, has become the oppressors. I reconsider Freire's argument that animals do not have consciousness and are ahistorical. I argue that despite our lack of acknowledgment or our not taking animals into consideration, animals have consciousness. A theory of liberation ought to provide a place for the intrinsic role animals play in our life and recognize that we are oppressive of animals by transforming their ways of life into a mass production fest.

For many, the subject of animal rights is obnoxious. We do not like to talk about it, and instead we enjoy a delicious steak, and we would rather avoid and deny the reality of the slaughterhouses than to join a conversation. Some of us simply do not care about animals, and this is when the struggle becomes even harder; however, Freire recognizes that,

Hope is an ontological need...My hope is necessary, but it is not enough. Alone, it does not win. But without it, my struggle will be weak and wobbly. We need critical hope the way a fish needs unpolluted water.<sup>139</sup>

Having hope that people will come to realize that animals should not be treated the way the capitalistic market is treating them, that animals feel, animals have fear and they have complex communities just like humans, is not hopeless. The day will come when we realize so, however, as Freire recognizes, hoping for this to happen is not enough. He argues that the oppressed should engage in dialectical thought in which "world and action are intimately



interdependent.”<sup>140</sup> Dialogue is critical to a theory of understanding and change, “no reality transforms itself”.<sup>141</sup> Dialogue is not enough, but it should be a good starting point between parties (parties being the oppressors who cease to think about the impact of their actions), that very negation affirms the engation of animal rights and animal oppression.

Paulo Freire argues that a particular problem of the oppressed is that they are contradictory beings, divided beings shaped by and existing in a concrete situation of oppression and violence.<sup>142</sup> Imagine, individuals marching for the equal rights in the United States and afterward X and Y go and have a delicious burger. It is not the act of eating the hamburger that makes them oppressors of animals but the act of negation of the importance of having a dialogue about animal oppression. It is important to notice that while the oppressed are fighting against such oppression, they can be the oppressors towards animals.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire argues “an act is oppressive only when it prevents people from being more fully human.”<sup>143</sup> Therefore, discourse and dialogue on animal rights and the realization of how inhumane factory farming is and the reality that is experienced behind the walls of the slaughterhouses, is needed for an individual to be more fully human. A fully human individual will NOT allow what takes place behind the slaughterhouses.

People have in the past often seen other beings as things, or objects for the oppressors' use (in this case, those individuals who do not engage in the animal rights debate and who do not understand the unnecessary harm and cruelty), everything that surrounds the oppressor is a tool for their domination.<sup>144</sup>

Through a sadistic drive, animal oppressors transform the animate into something inanimate and rips apart from the animal, one essential quality of life: freedom.<sup>145</sup> For instance,

milk that is consumed by humans was meant to feed a cow calve, cows do not resign to their right of being a mother, the decision is made by the milk industry and the consumers. When a cow is ripped away from her calf, there is a psychological impact on the mother who feels this separation. According to Sarah Taylor, author of *Vegetarian to Vegan*,

On a factory farm, cow's milk is not intended for baby cows – it's intended for humans. Therefore, baby calves are not allowed to nurse. They are taken from their mothers as soon as two hours after birth, and are either fed a commercial milk replacer that is made from dried milk powder, or they are fed milk that has been deemed unfit for human consumption.

We decide for animals, we decide their future and even worse, while deciding in their future (slaughterhouse/farm factory) we also decide the cheapest possible procedure that will give us the product we seek, most inexpensive often meaning the cruelest.

Even Freire's theory of oppression left animals out of it. He was wrong in believing that oppression was designated for humans by human beings and not animals. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire talks about a unique and critical distinction between animals and humans. He argues that the ability of a human being to treat him or herself as the object of his reflection is what distinguishes us from animals. Freire continues by arguing that animals cannot set objectives nor infuse their transformation of nature with any significance beyond itself. I argue that this is a mistaken generalization and assumption. First, animals have been shown to set objectives and achieve them, when trained and given duties, animals are almost as capable of performing a task as humans.

Furthermore, even if Freire's assumption is correct and we conclude that animals are ahistorical and therefore their "ahistorical life does not occur in the "world"<sup>146</sup> one can still argue that as a fully conscious individual, one who wants to be free from oppression, ought not to

oppress those who cannot speak up for themselves. Those who have the ahistorical element that make us think they do not occur in the world conscious beings live in.

Freire talks about the oppressor always wanting to objectify things, as oppressors we take animals from their animated state of being and turn them into a meal, an object, something that is going to be served on your table for your best convenience. Consequently, it can become even clearer why humans (with their intellect and praxis) ought to fight for animal rights. Freire argues that only human beings,

are praxis, they can truly transform reality, and this is the source of knowledge and creation. Animal activity, which occurs without a praxis, is not creative; peoples transforming activity is.<sup>147</sup>

Humans can transform reality, to add knowledge to their surrounding, to become historical, social beings, to produce material goods but also intangible relationships such as social institutions, ideas and concepts.<sup>148</sup> In fighting for liberation, wouldn't it be the case that we want to live in a world, in Freire's words, "a world that is more round, less ugly, and more just."<sup>149</sup> Wouldn't a world more round, less ugly and more just involve an invitation to talk about animal rights? The world in which animals are being slaughtered, humans are dying because of the continuous infections found in animal cattle and a world in which animals are being exploited behind zoos and circuses, does not sound like a Freireian world, just and less ugly. Also, Freire argues that

In order to achieve humanization, which presupposes the elimination of dehumanizing oppression, it is absolutely necessary to surmount the limit- situations in which people are reduced to things.<sup>150</sup>

Let's break the previous argument into sections to understand the impact of his claim and the lack of clarity in his assumption that animals are ahistorical, and therefore not included in the theory of liberation. For us to achieve humanization, we need to eliminate dehumanizing oppression. Killing is a dehumanizing process, and it tears away freedom from the animate

being. By killing animals as mass production in slaughterhouses, we are preventing them from living a life in freedom, in nature where they belong. Mass production is a dehumanizing oppression process. Acknowledging this is a limit- situation, humans are limited to see this and by implementing a limit-act, the understanding of such situation, we can overcome this dehumanizing oppression as a limit-situation. One not needs to believe that animals have souls or consciousness or are historical beings; one just needs to act upon the mere definition of Freire's humanization to avoid any form of dehumanizing oppression.

I criticized Freire's lack of recognition that to live in a world free from harm and more round, we need to act as moral agents to animate beings. In order to free ourselves from oppression, we need to do this in the holistic sense of the word; namely, we cannot act as non-oppressors to humans but oppress animals, and take them to be nothing more than objects that will satisfy our desires. Using Freire's liberation theory I formulated an argument to show how we ought to be aware and start conversations and dialogues of animal rights in order to achieve a non-oppressive status. By talking about animal rights, we are getting a step closer to ending a dehumanizing process. Instead of talking about speciesism, we need to begin talking about animal oppression, to start acknowledging that we are oppressors to animals and not until we do this is that we are going to achieve a deeper understanding of oppression and begin to act.

Next chapter provides my theory of oppression, drawing into feminist theory and political philosophy; I will show what I mean by animal oppression and how we ought to talk about it.

## CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSION

“The first thing you’ve got to do, in any kind of change, is to recognize the forms of oppression that exist.” Noam Chomsky

The aim of this project is to introduce a new axis of oppression, animal oppression.

Acknowledging the existence of this axis of oppression should allow us to see that if we want total liberation from oppression, we should stop oppressing others. I have expressed two cases in which eating animal products is permissible. For instance, my argument is built towards the scenario in which Sue goes to a restaurant, and she is presented with two options, a) tofu and quinoa salad and b) lettuce with chicken and cranberries. Both salads are the same price; Sue will choose the salad that is convenient for her taste and palate. I argue that Sue becomes an oppressor the moment that she chooses the chicken salad instead of the quinoa and tofu salad. This means that my conclusion only follows when one individual is presented with two or more options, and she still chooses the animal product.

Animal oppression is not speciesism. Animal oppression is different to the term speciesism because, in cases of speciesism, an individual believes that his species is superior to non-human species. In animal oppression, one does not need to accept this; an individual is geared more to a pleasure and satisfaction view. To justify this, imagine David. David is aware of the terror and suffering that animals go through in the slaughtering process, he tries to avoid red meat and chicken but still enjoys seared tuna and crab. David believes that animals should die in a more “peaceful” way. He is not a speciesist; he thinks that all species are equal and that when he is eating his tuna, he is doing something morally wrong. However, he is an active animal oppressor when he continues eating animal products. One does not need to be a speciesist to be an oppressor, but one has to be an oppressor to be a speciesist.

It is important to acknowledge that there is a line that needs to be drawn in our moral theory. A line needs to be drawn between the debates of eating plants versus eating animals. This line will allow us to survive. However, a problem may arise when arguing that the line should protect sentient beings such as non-human animals. Therefore, it is permissible to eat plants but not non-human animals. The problem will be the following: Descartes believed that animals did not feel because they were rational. Nowadays we know that animals are sentient beings but plants are too. How can we justify the eating of plants but the protection of animals? First, we can argue that communication is the fundamental criterion between human and non-human animals from plants. However, in *Brilliant Green: the Surprising History and Science of Plant Intelligence*, plant neurobiologist Stefano Mancuso argues that,

Plants are wonderful communicators: they share a lot of information with neighboring plants or with other organisms such as insects or other animals. The scent of a rose, or something less fascinating as the stench of rotting meat produced by some flowers, is a message for pollinators.<sup>151</sup>

We encounter a problem in our debate for acknowledging animal oppression and not plant oppression. I acknowledge that we need to deepen our consciousness and understanding of the impact of plants in our lives. For the purpose of this thesis I need to clarify and emphasize in drawing the line, for survival purposes, between eating plants and eating animals.

In previous chapters, I have discussed different definitions of oppression that feminist philosophers have brought into the conversation regarding human species. My definition of animal oppression is built upon sections of various theories. In the introduction, I discuss the animal-human interaction as a moral and paradoxical relationship. Furthermore, I present statistics and background on the correlation between global warming, chronic diseases with meat consumption. The aim of this project is to acknowledge that individuals often ignore the impact

of animal exploitation. As “oppressors” they often lack the recognition of their actions, they do not understand that they are committing an injustice. I want to talk about animal oppression as a subject of justice. When people have the option to eat alternatives to animal products and yet still choose to eat animals, we are committing an injustice. By discussing meat consumption as a subject of injustice, I aimed to introduce a new axis of oppression, that of animal oppression.

My aim is to present an argument for the recognition of animal oppression that differs from speciesism. Animal oppression is different to the term speciesism because, in cases of speciesism, an individual believes that his species is superior to non-human species. In animal oppression, one does not need to believe this. An individual is geared more to a pleasure and satisfaction view. One does not need to be a speciesist to be an oppressor but one has to be an oppressor to be a speciesist.

My theory summarizes as the following. Animal oppression happens when animals are caught among forces that restrict their mobility, they are trapped into cages; animals are surrounded by a network of systematically related barriers, their relations to each other are as confining as the solid walls of a dungeon<sup>152</sup>, the barriers and forces are maintained by both women and men, people who eat animal products when they have the option **NOT** to. Furthermore, animal oppression takes place when we enforce Young’s five faces of oppression. We *exploit* animals and turn them into feeding machines. Second, through language and history we have *marginalized* animals from the human spectrum. The history of animals has been marginalized from the language we use and history. We haven’t been able to place animals in the same spectrum as other human issues and problems. Third, animals are *powerless*; we exploit and oppress animals when we act upon the powerless species.

Fourth, we live in a culture in which we believe that eating steak makes us stronger; this *cultural imperialism* factor enables and justifies our behavior towards animals. Our culture accepts animals' oppression and finds nothing ethically disturbing about the exploitation of animals because we have institutionalized such oppression; our language is structured to accept this oppression.<sup>153</sup> When the words animal and beast are used as insults maintains separation between human animals and nonhuman animals. We have structured our language to avoid the acknowledgment of our biological similarity.<sup>154</sup> Fifth, we employ *violence* as a method of human empowerment. As Young recognizes, violence is a social practice, and we clearly see it on slaughterhouses where animals are slaughtered violently without any thought that animals think and feel.

Finally, the principal difference that will place animal oppression further from these elements previously proposed by feminist theorists is that it is an option to be the oppressor. We enforce animal oppression when we choose to eat animal products<sup>155</sup> even though we have the option of **NOT** doing so. One does not need to be a speciesist to be an oppressor but one has to be an oppressor to be a speciesist.

I have talked about animal oppression as an alternative axis of oppression, one that we can consciously avoid when we realize that we are oppressors when eating animal products. The impact of recognizing animal oppression is that it should serve as a basis to liberation. When we choose not to eat animal products, we are actively choosing not to be the oppressors, when we choose not to be the oppressors we are lessening the ways in which oppression exist. As I have mentioned, speciesism and animal oppression are two different concepts that one needs to differentiate. In the example above, David is not a speciesist but he is an oppressor. Paulo Freire acknowledged this; the problem of the oppressed is that they are contradictory beings, shaped by



and existing in a concrete situation of oppression and violence.<sup>156</sup> Imagine, individuals marching for the equal rights in the United States and afterward X and Y go and have a delicious burger. It is both the act of eating the burger that makes them oppressors of animals and the act of refusing to engage and having a dialogue about animal oppression. It is important to notice that while the oppressed are fighting against such oppression, they can also be oppressors.

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## Chapter 1. Theory of Justice

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Kellert, "American Attitudes Toward and Knowledge of Animals: An Update," *Humane Society Institute for Science and Policy Animal Studies Repository* (1984).

<sup>2</sup> "Factory Farms - A Well-Fed World." A WellFed World. Accessed May 02, 2016.  
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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., A Well-Fed World.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement* (Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2009), 65.

<sup>5</sup> Helen O'Hara, "SeaWorld vs. Blackfish: The Film That Saved the Whales," *The Telegraph*, November 10, 2010, accessed December 8, 2015,  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/film/blackfish/seaworld-orca-whales-finding-dory/>.

<sup>6</sup> "Fix the FDA," <http://www.nrdc.org/health/fda/>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., FDA.

<sup>8</sup> Melanie Joy's work on carnism and the moral dualism problem relating the domestic/farmed animal dualism is going to be explored.

<sup>9</sup> Hal Herzog, *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat* (Harper Perennial, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> "U.S. Beef Industry," last modified Wednesday, January 20, 2016,

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/animal-products/cattle-beef/statistics-information.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> A special section is going to be given to the topic of speciesism. As Peter Singer establishes the definition in *Animal Liberation*, speciesism is a prejudice or attitude of bias for the interests of members of one's species and against those of members of other species (6). Like racism, sexism, speciesists allow the interests of their own species to override the greater interests of members of other species. Furthermore, experiments on animals have been grounded on the false belief that we ought to perform such experiments to advance our understanding and knowledge of the human species. However, there is an analogy between speciesism and racism that applies in practice, as Singer notes, "blatant racism has led to painful experimenting on other races, defended on the grounds of their contribution to knowledge and possible usefulness for the experimenting race" (83).

<sup>12</sup> The work by Paul Nadasdy "The gift in the animal: the ontology of hunting and human-animal sociality" is going to be explored as the fundamental basis of an exploration of the anthropology aspect of this work.

<sup>13</sup> *Others*, being non-human animals.

<sup>14</sup> "Comparisons of Religions,"

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~pluralsm/affiliates/jainism/workshop/Worldrlgn.PDF>

<sup>15</sup> Attribution to Pythagoras by Ovid, as quoted in *The Extended Circle: A Dictionary of Humane Thought* (1985)

<sup>16</sup> Plato. *The Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Moses Maimonides. *The Guide for the Perplexed*. Translated by M. Friedländer. 1995.

<sup>18</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer. *The Basis of Morality*. (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1915).

<sup>19</sup> Aurobindo Ghose. *The Life Divine*. (New York: Greystone Press, 1949).

<sup>20</sup> Leo Tolstoy. *What I Believe*. (London: Elliot Stock, 1885).

<sup>21</sup> Richard Ryder. *Animal Revolution: Changing Attitudes Towards Speciesism*. (Oxford, UK: B. Blackwell, 1989).

- <sup>22</sup> John Rawls, *Justice As Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 16.
- <sup>23</sup> Social primary goods are going to enable individuals to achieve their rational plans of life. By virtue of being rational, individuals with need these social primary goods, regardless of anything else. Let's emphasize the importance of **rationality** in his argument.
- <sup>24</sup> The basic structure of society is the way in which the main political and social institutions of society fit together into one system of social cooperation, and the way they assign basic rights and duties and regulate the division of advantages that arises from social cooperation over time (Justice as Fairness, 10).
- <sup>25</sup> John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 54.
- <sup>26</sup> Rawls, *Justice As Fairness*, 58.
- <sup>27</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 79.
- <sup>28</sup> Rawls, *Justice As Fairness*, 41.
- <sup>29</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 125.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., 53.
- <sup>31</sup> Rawls, *Justice As Fairness*, 41.
- <sup>32</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 266.
- <sup>33</sup> lep.utm.edu
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., 10.
- <sup>35</sup> Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 33.
- <sup>36</sup> Charles Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust* (New York: Lantern Books, 2002) p. 24.
- <sup>37</sup> John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (Columbia University Press, 2005), 21.
- <sup>38</sup> Daniel Dombrowski, *Babies and Beasts: the argument from marginal cases* (University of Illinois Press, 1997), 57.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid., 58.
- <sup>40</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 508-509.
- <sup>41</sup> Dombrowski, *Babies and Beasts*, 59.
- <sup>42</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 80.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., 347.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., 348.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid., 349.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., 349.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid., 350.
- <sup>48</sup> Jonathan Foer, "Eating animals is making us sick," *CNN*, October 28, 2009, accessed January 10, 2016, [http://www.cnn.com/2009/OPINION/10/28/opinion.jonathan.foer/index.html?eref=rss\\_health](http://www.cnn.com/2009/OPINION/10/28/opinion.jonathan.foer/index.html?eref=rss_health).
- <sup>49</sup> Dombrowski, *Babies and Beasts*, 177.
- <sup>50</sup> John Allen and Stephanie Lavau, "Just-In-Time Disease, Biosecurity, poultry and power," *Journal of Cultural Economy*, DOI: 10.1080/17530350.2014.904243.
- <sup>51</sup> John Allen and Stephanie Lavau, "Just-In-Time Disease, Biosecurity, poultry and power," *Journal of Cultural Economy*, DOI: 10.1080/17530350.2014.904243.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid., 10.



- <sup>53</sup> Martha Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality and Species Membership* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 337.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 392.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 392-401.
- <sup>57</sup> Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 35.
- <sup>58</sup> Rita Laws. "History of Vegetarianism - Native Americans and Vegetarianism." *History of Vegetarianism - Native Americans and Vegetarianism*. 1994. Accessed May 02, 2016. [http://www.ivu.org/history/native\\_americans.html](http://www.ivu.org/history/native_americans.html).
- <sup>59</sup> Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 26.
- <sup>60</sup> "The West: Francisco Vazquez De Coronado." PBS.
- <sup>61</sup> Ake Hultrantz, *Native Religions of North America* (Waveland Press, Inc., 1987), 14.
- <sup>62</sup> Shepard Krech, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), 26.
- <sup>63</sup> Nathan Sherrer, "Probing the Relationship Between Native Americans and Ecology." (PhD diss., The University of Alabama).
- <sup>64</sup> Lynn White, *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis*. In Ian Barbour, ed. *Western Man and Environmental Ethics* (Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1973), 1205.
- <sup>65</sup> Annika Carlsson-Kanyama and Alejandro D González, "Potential contributions of food consumption patterns to climate change," *American Society of Nutrition*, (2009), DOI:10.3945/ajcn.2009.26736AA.
- <sup>66</sup> Annika Carlsson-Kanyama, "Food, livestock production, energy, climate change, and health," *Food Policy* (1998), DOI: 10.1016/S0306-9192(98)00037-2
- <sup>67</sup> See "Food, livestock production, energy, climate change, and health," also, "Food, livestock production, energy, climate change, and health."

## Chapter 2. Animal Oppression

- <sup>68</sup> Marilyn Frye, *Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Crossing Press, 1983), 2.
- <sup>69</sup> Frye, *Politics of Reality*, 4.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.
- <sup>73</sup> See "Monkeys' grasp basic grammar," BBC News, January 22, 2004. (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3413865.stm>). On bonobo and chimpanzee communication, see Rowan Hooper, "Bonobos and chimps speak with gestures," *NewScientist.com*, April 30, 2007 (<http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn11756-bonobos-and-chimps-apes-speak-with-gestures-.html>).
- <sup>74</sup> Steven Best, p. 166
- <sup>75</sup> Iris Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2011) 40.
- <sup>76</sup> Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 41.
- <sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.
- <sup>78</sup> [http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch\\_humanism.html](http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_humanism.html)
- <sup>79</sup> Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 56.

- <sup>80</sup> Ibid., 59.
- <sup>81</sup> Carol Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 95.
- <sup>82</sup> Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 62.
- <sup>83</sup> Ibid., 64.
- <sup>84</sup> Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 48.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid., 50.
- <sup>86</sup> (Baker 1973) from Adams book
- <sup>87</sup> Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 52.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid., 53.
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid., 56.
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid., 56.
- <sup>91</sup> Ibid., 57.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid., 63.
- <sup>93</sup> Ibid., 73.
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid., 73.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid., 73.
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid., 73.
- <sup>97</sup> Jason MjcGahan. "Juarez's Missing Girls Were Sex Slaves—And Everyone Knew It." The Daily Beast. 2015. Accessed May 02, 2016.  
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/07/02/did-mexican-cops-help-kill-the-girls-of-juarez.html>.
- <sup>98</sup> Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 93.
- <sup>99</sup> Ibid., 93.
- <sup>100</sup> People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, Living without Cruelty" Norfolk, VA.
- <sup>101</sup> Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 100.
- <sup>102</sup> Ibid., 112.
- <sup>103</sup> There is a need to recognize the overlapping of different axes of oppression, while each of them can have unique elements; they all share some commonalities such as hierarchical domination of any kind.
- <sup>104</sup> Cheshire Calhoun, *Feminism, the Family, and the Politics of the Closet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- <sup>105</sup> Rationalist/speciesist assumption underpinning human oppression of nonhuman animals, prevalent at least since Aristotle and still well alive today in discourse and "common sense".
- <sup>106</sup> Thomas Bottomore, *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Oxford: Cambridge, 1991).
- <sup>107</sup> Emilene Ostlin, "The Big Four Meatpackers." *High Country News*. Last Revision, March 21 2011. <https://www.hcn.org/issues/43.5/cattlemen-struggle-against-giant-meatpackers-and-economic-squeezes/the-big-four-meatpackers-1> (Accessed March 14, 2015.)
- <sup>108</sup> Luke Brian, "Justice, Caring and Animal Liberation," Adams and Donovan, *Animals and Women*, 81-82.
- <sup>109</sup> Ibid., 82.
- <sup>110</sup> During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, during the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, 300 men and women rallied for equality for women with a focus on suffrage. In the 1960s, the second wave began and its focus was unfolded in the context of the anti-war and civil rights movement. Mid-90s, post-colonial and post-modern thinking, the third wave was born, during this phase constructs of universal womanhood, body, gender, sexuality, were destabilized.

<sup>111</sup> Carol Adams, "Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals," *Hypatia* 6, no. 1 (1991): 134.

<sup>112</sup> The intersectionality of oppression was first used by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, it has been a major element for critical studies and feminist theory, intersectionality allows for the examination of specific forms of oppression and the intersection of different forms of discrimination. Furthermore, intersectionality gives us a description of the social structures that create social positions in which they are involved, micro-level processes and macro-levels that gives us a more accurate image of oppression. Patricia Collins gives this model of intersectionality in the Symposium (492) "as an attempt to the notion of interlocking oppressions refers to macro level connections linking systems of oppression such as race, class, and gender. This is the model describing the social structures that create social positions. Second, the notion of intersectionality describes micro-level processes – namely, how each individual and group occupies a social position within interlocking structures of oppression described by the metaphor of intersectionality.

### Chapter 3. On Animal Rights

<sup>113</sup> Richard Ryder, *Animal Revolution*, 4.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>119</sup> Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 5.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>122</sup> Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 33.

<sup>123</sup> Charles Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust* (New York: Lantern Books, 2002) p. 24.

<sup>125</sup> Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 21.

<sup>126</sup> Steven M. Wise, *Rattling the Cage: Toward Legal Rights for Animals* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books, 2000), 264-5.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>130</sup> Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 3.

<sup>131</sup> Elizabeth Fisher, *Woman's Creation: Sexual Evolution and the Shaping of Society* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1979).

<sup>132</sup> Patterson, 15.

<sup>133</sup> Steven Best, 104.

<sup>134</sup> Steve Best. "Animal Rights and the New Enlightenment."

<http://www.drstevebest.org/AnimalRightsandtheNewEnlightenment.htm>

<sup>135</sup> Tom Regan, *The Animal Rights Position*.

- <sup>136</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 37.  
<sup>137</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 45.  
<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 47.  
<sup>139</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope*, 2.  
<sup>140</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 53.  
<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 53.  
<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 55.  
<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 57.  
<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 58.  
<sup>145</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man* (New York, 1966), 32.  
<sup>146</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 98.  
<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 101.  
<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 101.  
<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 26.  
<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 103.

#### **Chapter 4. Animal Oppression NOT Speciesism**

- <sup>151</sup> Stefano Mancuso, *Brilliant Green: the Surprising History and Science of Plant Intelligence* (Island Press, 2015).  
<sup>152</sup> Marilyn Frye, *Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Crossing Press, 1983), 5.  
<sup>153</sup> Carol Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 95.  
<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 93.  
<sup>155</sup> One question that we need to acknowledge is the following, Is the oppression we visit upon species confined to the consumption of animal products, or could we be oppressing them when we use them in maintenance of our land, etc.?  
<sup>156</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 55.

## VITA

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