On oppression: Animals, the absent referent

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1. Introduction

"[I]n analyzing the oppression of human beings, the oppression of animals ought not to be ignored. However, the absent referent, because of its absence, prevents our experiencing connections between oppressed groups" – Adams, 1990/2013:70

In late 2017, Jonas Fricker, a member of the Swiss national council and green party, sparked controversy due to his comparison regarding the transportation of pigs to slaughter and the deportation of Jews during the second world war (Un élu Vert choque en comparant le transport de porcs à la déportation des juifs, 2017). His remarks were deemed inappropriate and anti-Semitic, causing him to step down from the national council (L'élu Vert auteur d'un dérapage sur la déportation des juifs démissionne, 2017). This controversial parallel is far from being a novel account. The animal rights organisation People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) have used it multiple times, from their "Holocaust on your plate" campaign where they showcased images of concentration camp victims juxtaposed with images of factory-farmed animals, to the organization's president being quoted stating that "Six million Jews died in concentration camps, but six billion broiler chickens will die this year in slaughterhouses" (DeMello, 2012:169), all of which were met with public outrage and backlash. Though many have been offended by these claims, some Jews and holocaust survivors themselves have made the same comparison. Jewish author Isaac Bashevis Singer famously wrote in his short story *The Letter Writer*, "In relation to them [animals], all people are Nazis; for the animals, it is an eternal Treblinka" (Singer, 1968:26). Chemist and animal rights activist Alex Hershaft also noted striking similarities between what the Nazi's did to his family and what we do to the animals we raise as food, such as "the branding or tattooing of serial numbers to identify victims, the use of cattle cars to transport victims to their death, the crowded housing of victims in wood crates, the arbitrary designation of who lives and who dies — the Christian lives, the Jew dies; the dog lives, the pig dies." (Josefin, 2016). Furthermore, he remembers coming across piles of discarded animal body parts at a Midwestern slaughterhouse, "reminding him of memories from the Holocaust", and how "we are always capable of oppression" (Josefin, 2016). Indeed, the comparison itself is not all that farfetched considering that the Nazi's actually modelled their concentration camps and transportation to said camps after the speedy, efficient, and streamline American slaughterhouses (DeMello, 2012:167).

One explanation for the offence this comparison generates is revealed by Carol Adams' discussion on metaphoric borrowing. Metaphoric borrowing such as "the rape of (non-human) animals" or PETA's "Holocaust on your plate", transforms the experience of women and European Jews into "a vehicle for explicating another being's oppression" (Adams, 1990/2013:68). She argues that this is inappropriate considering that "Some terms are so powerfully specific to one group's oppression that their appropriation to others is potentially exploitative" (Adams, 1990/2013:68). Both the Holocaust and rape have different social contexts for European Jews and women than they do for other animals. The same is true for the metaphoric appropriation by many radical feminists through the metaphor of "butchering" to describe women's oppression without acknowledging its origin in the oppression of livestock. As a result, metaphoric appropriation transforms the group who suffered the original violence into the absent referent.

Carol Adams explains "the (structure of the) absent referent" (Adams, 1991:136) through the paradoxical existence and erasure of non-human animals. In *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990), she demonstrates the conceptual process by which the "animal" disappears and becomes "the absent referent" through the example of meat (Adams, 1991:136). In her words "Animals in name and body are made absent *as animals* for meat to exist" (Adams, 1990/2013). The erasure of the animal in name and body is both literal and conceptual. More specifically, the animal's body is transformed into something completely foreign to its "animal" origin and is renamed "beef", "pork", "steak", "sausage", "hamburger", etc. Rather than conjuring up dead, butchered animals, mouthwatering cuisine is conjured through the gastronomic language of meat. Moreover, if the animal is alive, it cannot be meat; we don not eat "pig" but rather "pork". In Adams' words: "Without animals there would be no meat eating, yet they are absent from the act of eating meat because they have been transformed into food" (Adams, 1991:136). As a result, "[t]he absent referent permits us to forget about the animal as an independent entity; it also enables us to resist efforts to make animals present" (Adams, 1990/2013:66). Although the concept of "absent referent" is exemplified through the idea of "meat", it is not exclusive to non-human animals and can be used as a tool for understanding oppression as a whole and how oppressions intertwine with one-another. As Adams points out: "Through the structure of the absent referent, a dialectic of absence and presence of oppressed groups occurs. What is absent refers back to one oppressed group while defining another" (Adams, 1990/2013:69,70). Thus, for Adams, "The structure of the absent referent in patriarchal culture strengthens individual oppressions by always recalling other oppressed groups" (Adams, 1990/2013: 69).

In the case of non-human animal metaphors, "the very 'power of such animal metaphors depends on a prior cultural understanding of other animals themselves, as beings who are by nature abject, degraded, and hence worthy of extermination". This cultural understanding of the non-human animals becomes absent in the metaphoric appropriation. Another example are women as the absent referent when we speak of the rape of non-human animals. The lack of acknowledgement of the originating oppression not only misrecognizes the violence experienced by a specific group in a specific context, but also fails to acknowledge the intersectional nature of oppression: "The interaction between physical oppression and the dependence on metaphors that rely on the absent referent indicates that we distance ourselves from whatever is different by equating it with something we have already objectified." (Adams, 1990/2013:69). Thus, metaphoric borrowing is a form of misrecognition of violence, and can be understood as a form of oppression.

However, this explanation does not account for the time the comparison between human suffering and non-human animal suffering actually worked in favour of a particular species of non-human animal. In the 1960's media attention was fixated on stories about pets (mostly dogs) being taken from their backyards and sent to research laboratories; the most gripping of which was the story of a Dalmatian named Pepper. In the wave of this media frenzy, a group of activists who had been collecting stories regarding pet theft were able to attract the attention of *Life* magazine, who in 1966 published an eight-page essay with shocking photographs titled "Concentration Camps for Dogs" (Gruen, 2011:113). Both of these stories prompted the general public to bombard the United States Congress and Senate to such a degree that they briefly surpassed letters regarding Civil rights and the Vietnam War. As a result, lawmakers signed a bill in 1966 to regulate the treatment of laboratory animals titled Laboratory Animal Welfare Act, which would later be known as the Animal Welfare Act (Gruen, 2011:113). Why is it that the comparison was so well received in this case, when Jews remain the absent referent in this comparison? I argue that this is because the oppression non-human animals face, and thus our concern for this oppression, depends on the social construction of non-human animals. Indeed, pets are considered to be closer to humans, as members of the family and thus as enjoying the status of "personhood" as well as entitlement to moral obligations. This is a quality that, according to humans, most other non-human animals lack, such as lab-animals and livestock.

Non-human animals as the absent referent are also present in academia. In most academic research, the non-human other is seldom present. This is even true, to a certain degree, for certain animal behaviour studies whose primary goal is to research a particular non-human

animal, and yet they fail to capture them as what they *are*, individuals (Birke, 1994:32). Instead, any behaviour is generalized as a "species" typical behaviour and must be analysed from an external point of view. Any account that would anthropomorphize is discredited as research violating the principle of objectivity. The absence of the non-human other is particularly startling in the social sciences –with the rare exceptions of human animal studies, critical animal studies and ecofeminism. It is as if most academics consider the "animal" (or more accurately the "non-human animal") as not pertaining to the "human" world; as if they existed in different spheres, to quote Michael Walzer (1983), that never interact. And yet, non-human animals are around us all the time, from the pets we share our homes with, to the sparrows, pigeons, or squirrels we share our streets and parks with, to the ones we most interact with, those that end up as food on our dinner plates. Although non-human animals are ever-present in human life and society, they are continuously ignored, forgotten, erased, and so too is their relationship with humans.

This paper argues that non-human animals can be considered as an oppressed group whose oppression interacts with other group's oppression due to the prevailing oppressive structure in Western society. Furthermore, their oppression has been the absent referent not only in academia but in society at large, which is problematic due to the interlocking nature of oppression. The oppression non-human animals face is both of academic concern as well as a concern for society at large. More specifically, the human and non-human world are considered completely separate from one-another in political theory, in academia as a whole and in society more generally. On the one hand, by recognizing the importance of non-human oppression, this paper offers a more concise definition of oppression that can be applicable to all groups. This enables further research to go beyond the scopes of this paper in order to analyse the intersectional implications of non-human oppression. Moreover, being mindful of oppression in intersectional terms also enables for academic research to steer away from claims that reinforce or maintain oppressive structures. On the other hand, understanding oppression in structural and intersectional terms also aids in more effective activism for liberation movements. By adopting an intersectional approach, liberation movements (and "animal" liberation movements especially) can avoid campaigns that reinforce and maintain other's oppression. For instance, PETA's sexualization of women's bodies in their campaigns supports the sexual oppression of women, and thus contributes to the oppressive structure it is attempting to dismantle. Thus, this paper argues against those who wish to prioritize human injustices (such as poverty, sexism, etc.) over non-human ones and argues that they should, instead, be

combatted in unison. By realizing that both human and non-human oppressions interact and support one another, the only way to undermine the oppressive structure is through a unified approach between human and non-human injustices. In other words, by understanding oppression in holistic terms. This is the normative argument that this paper presents. Thus, I argue in the same direction as Iris Marion Young, that is "where social group differences exist and some groups are privileged whilst others are oppressed, social justice requires explicitly acknowledging and attending to those group differences in order to undermine oppression" (Young, 1990: 4). More specifically, in the context of this paper I argue that social justice requires acknowledging non-human oppression as oppression, as well as the interaction this oppression has on other oppressions in order to undermine the prevailing oppressive structure that exists in Western society.

In order to argue in favour of non-human animal oppression, this paper presents itself in three parts. First, it seeks to conceptualize oppression in a clear and concise manner in order to fully grasp what is being discussed as well as avoid criticisms concerning the relativity of oppression. Second, it aims to expand the concept of oppression so as to include non-human animals by demonstrating their oppression both conceptually as well as through Iris Marion Young's five faces of oppression. This step depends on a clear and concise definition of oppression in order to take seriously the idea of non-human oppression. As a result, it presents itself as a response to those who claim that by expanding this concept to other species it somehow devalues the concept, making it meaningless. Finally, by conceiving of oppression in structural and intersectional terms, this paper aims to further intersectional and post-intersectional literature so as to include non-human animals and question the implications this expansion has on our society, on our current treatment of non-human animals, as well as our treatment of other groups of humans. To be clear, conceiving of oppression in terms of intersectionality does not assume that non-human oppression, for instance, is at the root of all other forms of oppression, but rather that they all interact and maintain one another in an oppressive structure.

Finally, for the sake of clarity this paper prefers the term "non-human animals" to "animals" as psychologist Ken Shapiro points out, distinguishing human and animal is "as incoherent as saying 'carrots and vegetables'" (DeMello, 2012: 15). Furthermore, inspired by the importance of pronoun use in gender studies, such as gender-neutral or gender-inclusive pronouns, it prefers using the term "human" instead of "man", unless the philosopher cited clearly had no intention of being gender inclusive (such as Aristotle). In addition, it will refrain

from referring to non-human animals by pronouns such as "it" and favour "they" or "them" pronouns instead, so as to override the image of non-human animals as commodities, objects, or "things" and honour them with the recognition that they are "who's" or living sentient beings. Moreover, I do not wish to assume that which I do not know and make false assumptions that I believe to be universal due to my position in Western society. The "animal"/human divide that will be discussed at a later moment in this paper is a good example of such assumptions. As Margo DeMello points out, "[i]t is easy to believe that the conceptual boundary […] between humans and animals is universally found in human societies. However, anthropological studies and historical research have shown that there is quite a bit of cultural diversity in this regard. In many non-Western societies, nature and animals are not necessarily categories that are easily to the opposite of culture or humans." (DeMello, 2012:33,34). Thus, this paper focuses on the intersectional nature of non-human oppression in Western society specifically, as well as its implications for Western society.

2. Critical theory, intersectionality and post-intersectionality

2.1 Critical Theory

My understanding of oppression is grounded both in intersectional and post-intersectional literature. Both of these find their origins in critical theory. As its name suggests, critical theory is critical of the status quo and the socially constructed norms, categories, and boundaries that mould it. It considers dominant values, institutions and the world as a distortion of the "real", thereby preventing the world from being what it is, and becoming what it *ought* to be (Sanbonmatsu, 2011: 5). Furthermore, critical theory situates itself in a debate with positivist social sciences by entirely rejecting the ontological premise in social sciences (itself inspired by the natural sciences): that facts are separable from values (Sanbonmatsu, 2011: 5). Thus, critical theory rejects the idea of knowledge existing outside of the social world (Horkheimer, 1975: 196). Instead, it is impacted and shaped by the social world to such a degree that it is capable of structurally reproducing or reinforcing conditions of power, oppression, and exploitation (Macdonald, 2017: 517). Moreover, critical theory is not only epistemologically and methodologically opposed to these positivist traditions, but it also distinguishes itself from these traditions by being normatively and politically charged; this is perhaps the central element of critical theory. Indeed, its primary goal is human emancipation from slavery (or oppression and exploitation): "it [critical theory] unashamedly articulated the political importance of eradicating oppression and exploitation in all its guises, and concurrently establishing

historically and empirically possible practices of human emancipation, freedom, and happiness" (Macdonald, 2017: 520). Thus, critical theory focuses both on understanding the conditions of as well as the historically or contextually grounded possibilities for human emancipation (Macdonald, 2017).

2.2 Intersectionality

Although intersectional approaches existed long before any conceptualisation of the term "intersectionality" (notably in ecofeminism that focuses on the interconnected relationship between the domination of women and the domination of nature), Kimberlé Crenshaw was the first to coin the term in her "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color". She explores the intersectional identity of women of colour as well as the intersecting patterns of subordination they experience with regards to male violence or domestic violence. Moreover, she notes the failure by both feminist and anti-racist discourse to represent and capture the specificity of the discrimination faced by black women[1]. For instance, much of feminist discourse has essentialized the white woman's experience of male violence as the "pure" form of gender subordination (Ehenreich, 2002: 273). By omitting women of colour's particular location at the intersection of multiple patterns of subordination, the political remedies to domestic violence often fall short in helping women of colour as they are often skewed towards dealing with the issues of white middle class women. In other words, they do not take into account other women's intersectional identities thereby limiting their opportunities in society as well as erasing them from the public eye. This is due to the conflicting agendas of feminism and anti-racism resulting in both occurring in mutually exclusive terrains, which is not the case for women of colour. Thus, Crenshaw brings to light the specific ways in which race and gender mutually reinforce discrimination against black women, something that has been overlooked by many scholars before her. Her thesis reveals that coloured women's experience of male and domestic violence is specific to their location at the intersection of race, gender, class, and any other minority identity characteristic they may have (Levit, 2002: 228)[2]. Moreover, their intersectional location at the crossroads of various identities (and their oppressive counterparts) doesn't equate to experiencing separate and distinct forms of oppression simultaneously (or the sum of these oppressions). Instead, it is the combination of these intersecting patterns of subordination that produce new and unique

[1] She terms this type of intersectionality as "political intersectionality" (Crenshaw, 1991: 1252).
[2] She terms this type of intersectionality as "structural intersectionality" (Crenshaw, 1991: 1245, 1246).

obstacles for women of colour. In Levit's words: "The facts of identity are 'not additive' but instead 'indivisible'" (Levit, 2002: 229).

By building upon identity theory and anti-essentialism developed by critical theorists, Crenshaw brings to light the importance of intersectional analysis when examining social phenomena. On the one hand intersectionality rejects essentialism and "essential difference" by going beyond the categories that dominated essentialism debates in the 1980's and 1990's. Thus, intersectionality "recognizes the durability of social categories [and] challenges the foundation[s] [on] which such categorizations rest." (Kings, 67: 2017). This approach enables a focus on the role of social categories in society, scepticism towards current methods of social categorization, and as a result, rethinking the plight of neglected groups (Kings, 2017: 67). On the other hand, intersectional analysis reveals how different forms of subordination are mutually reinforcing, as Crenshaw notes: "The failure of feminism to interrogate race means that the resistance strategies of feminism will often replicate and reinforce the subordination of people of colour, and the failure of antiracism to interrogate patriarchy means that antiracism will frequently reproduce the subordination of women" (Crenshaw, 1991: 1252). This reflects Mari Matsuda's "ask the other question" whereby she interrogates the patriarchy in racism, the heterosexism in sexism or even the class interest in homophobia (Matsuda, 1991: 1989). This method highlights both obvious and non-obvious relationships of domination allowing for the realization that "no form of subordination ever stands alone" (Matsuda, 1991: 1989). This echoes the ecofeminist belief that the liberation of women cannot be achieved without the simultaneous liberation of nature from the clutches of exploitation (Kings, 2017: 70). Thus, intersectional theorists argue that "no person is free until the last and the least of us is free." (Matsuda, 1991: 1189).

2.3 Post-Intersectionality

Post-intersectionality takes intersectionality to a whole other level. It goes beyond the "pure forms" of intersectionality that reveal two or more subordinated statuses (Ehrenreich, 2002: 272, 273). The typical example of "pure" intersectionality is Crenshaw's thesis on black women who are not only subordinate due to their status as "women" but also due to their status as "black". However, post-intersectionality also takes into account hybrid forms of intersectionality or in other words, a combination of dominant and subordinated statuses. For instance, white women are subordinate due to their status of "woman" but dominant due to their status as "white". Furthermore, building even more on anti-essentialism, post-intersectionality

understands that "white women's experience is as particular a form of gender experience as are the experiences of women of colour" (Ehrenreich, 2002: 273). Hence, although intersectionality aimed to overcome white women's situation as the "pure" form of gender subordination, it still took it as the baseline from which to compare the intersectional identities of women.

Moreover, post-intersectionality interprets identity theory more faithfully by focusing on "group-based structures of inequality" rather than on the individual (Ehrenreich, 2002: 278). Indeed, Joan Williams proposes that post-intersectionality should move past identity and identity groups, and towards interactions of social power. This was proposed as a workaround to the problems of identity theory continually reducing itself to smaller subgroups as well as issues of identity which are not only constituted from outside but from inside too (Levit, 2002: 247). Although identity theory is all about social groups, intersectionality theory tends to focus excessively on the individual as the unit of analysis (Ehrenreich, 2002: 278). This becomes especially clear in Crenshaw's metaphor of intersectionality as traffic in an intersection (Crenshaw, 1989: 149). She imagines an individual at an intersection with traffic coming and going in all four directions. The vehicles approaching from the different directions represent different systems of oppression acting on the individual. In her words: "If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them." (Crenshaw, 1989: 149). This metaphor shows the indivisible effect of intersectional subordination as each vehicle would have some kind of "joint liability" for the injury.

Nancy Ehrenreich argues that post-intersectionality can be understood through the metaphor of a house of cards (Ehrenreich, 2002: 277, 279). Her house of cards enables the abstraction from the individual in order to focus on the interactions of social power through group-based inequalities. A house of cards is composed of many individual cards that are not identical but are similar. They belong to groups in both number and suit and are hierarchically organized within these groups. Thus, all of the cards exist in a web of relationships with other cards. Moreover, in the structure of the house of cards, every card supports (directly or indirectly) another, giving it strength that it wouldn't otherwise have on its own. As a result, "[t]he house represents the complex structure of mutual support created by the different systems of subordination" (Ehrenreich, 2002: 279). The "house of cards" metaphor more efficiently captures Crenshaw's concern for mutually enforcing systems of oppression. Furthermore, considering that the house of cards is mutually reinforcing, it is harder to destroy it by removing one card only (or one system of oppression): "To the extent that the cards support each other,

removing one […] does not pose much of a threat to the overall structure" (Ehrenreich, 2002: 279). Thus, it makes more sense to combat multiple oppressions at once rather than focusing on just one: "Eliminate enough of the card groups and the house will collapse altogether" (Ehrenreich, 2002: 280).

Thus, in order to "eradicate oppression in all its guises" (including oppressive structures), or at the very least undermine it, non-human oppression must not be overlooked, not only because it constitutes an oppression and thus an obstacle to freedom and emancipation, but also because non-human oppression interacts with human oppression (and vice-versa) in the oppressive structure that reigns over Western society. Moreover, due to the interlocking nature of oppression, human emancipation depends on considering non-human emancipation too. Indeed, the justification of non-human oppression can be extended to humans that are deemed lesser beings: "The ethic of human domination removed animals from the sphere of human concern. But it also legitimized the ill-treatment of those humans who were in a supposedly animal condition" (Thomas, 1983:44). Hence, this paper argues that non-human animals deserve our moral attention due to the interlocking nature of oppression. The lack of moral concern to their regard not only maintains non-human animals in a position of subordination, but it also contributes to oppression as a whole. Finally, combatting a specific human oppression will be more effective if oppression is combatted as a whole. By focusing on one oppression, other oppressions risk being maintained and reinforced, as demonstrated by Crenshaw's analysis on women of colour. Instead, attacking the oppressive structure through a coalition of different oppressions, including non-human ones, may be more effective in undermining its existence.

3. Oppression

3.1 What is oppression?

Oppression is a concept that is not only disputed and polysemous in the existing literature, but it is also rarely defined. It is often taken as a given, an intuitive concept, and as applying solely to the human species; its applicability beyond humans is seldom questioned. This is quite problematic considering that, as Iris Young notes, the concept of oppression has shifted from its "traditional usage" with the emergence of "new left social movements" of the 1960's and 1970's (Young, 2006: 4). Traditionally, the concept of oppression was used to describe non-liberal societies or "societies other than our own" that are characterized by

colonial and tyrannical rule (Young, 2006: 4). Colonial domination under Apartheid and communist societies are some examples. Today, however, oppression is no longer considered solely as "the exercise of tyranny by a ruling group", as the traditional definition suggests. Instead, 'oppression' has been extended to include the pitfalls of liberal societies as well, notably the "disadvantages and injustices" some groups face in everyday life. In Young's words: "oppression also refers to systemic constraints on groups that are not necessarily the result of the intentions of a tyrant. […] [O]ppression 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 […] in short, the normal processes of everyday life" (Young, 2006: 4).

Understanding 'oppression' in these terms is a start; however, where do we draw the line between what constitutes oppression and what doesn't? Does it include "any and all human experience of limitation or suffering" (Frye, 1983: 1). If so, then it seems that 'oppression' can include anything and everything under the sun, and, as a result, "the word 'oppression' is being stretched to meaninglessness" (Frye, 1983: 1). The following section focuses on clearly conceptualizing oppression so as to overcome these concerns.

3.2 The origin of oppression

Marion Frye brings our attention to the linguistic roots of 'oppression': "press", an action that "Mold[s]. Immobilize[s]. Reduce[s]." (Frye, 1983: 2). "Press" can be considered as a state of being "caught between or among forces and barriers [that] […] restrain, restrict or prevent […] motion or mobility" (Frye, 1983: 2). It is important to note that oppression, according to Frye, is a *collection* of barriers or forces. Thus, it is not the existence of one barrier that indicates the manifestation of oppression, but rather the existence of multiple barriers that, collectively, reduce, immobilize and mould. This is achieved through the use of force and/or power. Together, these barriers form an "oppressive structure" (or structures of subordination) that are supported by the contextual and social meanings behind these barriers. These "oppressive structures" include, patriarchy, heterosexism, classism, white supremacy, and, as will be discussed later, speciesism. Frye eloquently exemplifies 'oppression' as a collection of barriers though the phenomenon of racial segregation via ghettos (Frye, 1983: 11,12). The boundaries of racial ghettos are both a barrier to white people and to "ghetto dwellers"; it prevents white people from going in, and "ghetto dwellers" from coming out. The existence of this barrier, however, is not inherently oppressive. What makes this particular barrier oppressive

is its connection to other barriers that makeup the oppressive structure, as Frye affirms: "it is part of an enclosing structure of forces and barriers which tends to the immobilization and reduction of a group or category of people" (Frye, 1983: 10). Thus, the barrier is not oppressive to whites, even though it constitutes an obstacle to whites, as "the barrier does not exist in a systematic relationship with other barriers or forces forming a structure oppressive to whites" (Frye, 1983: 12). Instead, it is oppressive to "ghetto dwellers" as "it is a product of the intention, planning and action of whites for the benefit of whites, to secure and maintain privileges that are available to whites generally" (Frye, 1983: 12). For the sake of clarity, privilege "confers dominance, gives permission to control, because of one's race or sex" (McIntosh, 2011:129) as well as their sexual orientation or even their species. Moreover, it is an "unearned entitlement" or "unearned advantage" (McIntosh, 2011:130) resulting in societal stratification that favours the privileged group. It is thus central to the concept of oppression.

Clearly, there is a very strong relational element in oppression. According to Frye, oppression, occurs between *groups* of people, rather than individuals: "If an individual is oppressed, it is in virtue of being a member of a group or category of people that is systematically reduced, molded, immobilized" (Frye, 1983: 8). This echoes the importance of the focus on groups in identity theory. Thus, oppression need not be perceived or felt in order to exist as it does not depend on identification but rather on the structural relationships between groups. Iris Young also defends this position in her five faces of oppression which will be developed later on. Nevertheless, Frye believes that oppression is more easily recognizable when there is group identification as well as spatial confinement of the group (Marx class consciousness), whereas the lack of identification often leads to unnoticed/invisible forms of oppression (Frye, 1983: 8). Furthermore, this relational element of oppression is especially noticeable in terms of power. This reflects developments in post-intersectionality theory that focus on social power in terms of structures. Oppression can thus be understood in terms of power structures that manifest themselves through privilege (or lack-there-of). Not only is the use of force or power necessary in order to press, mould, and reduce, but it is a necessity in order for a group to secure and maintain their position of privilege. Likewise, the group(s) with power (political or otherwise) have the power of definition (or moulding and reduction) as well as the power to maintain their privilege (press), as will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The importance of power in oppression is also emphasized by Rowlands (2010) who considers power in terms of domination and obedience as well as an instrument of domination. Moreover, Karl Marx was one of the first to conceptualize oppression in terms of power. In his words:

"Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another" (Marx, 1848/1969:27). Although Marx's understanding of oppression can be considered as the specific form of exploitation, as shall be developed later with Young, the importance of (political) power does not go unnoticed. It can thus be argued that one of the core elements of oppression is the use of power, force and/or authority, that is structurally maintained and reproduced by certain groups. Moreover, this use of power in oppression through "moulding" and "reducing" can be used as an instrument of control: it *defines* groups through reductive stereotypes or prejudices, it defines *where* these groups can exist, and it decides *who* can be a member of what group (externally decided but can also be internally decided). This echoes Elizabeth Spelman's concept of tolerance where she affirms that those who have the power to include also have the power to exclude (Spelman, 1988: 163). This power to include or exclude is central to the concept of othering, which is itself an important component of oppression.

3.3 Relations of domination

Before turning to the concept of othering, for the sake of clarity, I will briefly touch upon the concept of "domination". Oppression, as I have described is often used interchangeably with the concept of domination, as illustrated by Rowland's understanding of oppression in terms of domination. Just like Young, Hirata et al. refer to the emancipatory movements of the 60's as denunciations of what they term "relations of domination" (rapports de domination), instead of oppression. They prefer this term to "relations of power" since they believe that "relations of power" downplay the effects of domination (Hirata et al., 2004:45). For them, domination works by stigmatizing groups based on representations and norms that are considered as universal and "natural truths" as well as excluding the dominated group(s) from the public eye (and from decision-making processes); in other words, transforming the "other" into an invisible entity (Hirata et al., 2004:46). Thus, they posit that "relations of domination" between groups of people impose constraints, subjection, and servitude to those at whom they are aimed. Furthermore, "relations of domination" introduce a structural dissymmetry that both maintains and is the result of domination. In this structural dissymmetry, one group is represented as the norm and imposes their values and norms as universal. Thus, the dominant group exerts a constant control over the dominated group; they decide the limits of the dominated group's rights (all the while seizing their own rights) and maintain the dominated group in a (politically) power-less status (Hirata et al., 2004:44,45). This

understanding of oppression in terms of relations of domination undeniably reflects the process of othering and its centrality to the concept of oppression. Let's now turn our attention to what "othering" is.

3.4 Othering

Simone de Beauvoir affirms not only that "Other" is a central category to human thinking, but also that the duality between "Same" (Même) and "Other" (l'Autre) is as old as the most "primal" of societies (De Beauvoir, 1949:18,19). The concept of "Other" or "othering" is linked to, and even, inseparable from the concept of oppression. Gruen affirms that othering is a precondition to oppression as it denies full moral consideration to those that are othered: "This process of "othering" is a precondition for oppression as it aids in denying members of certain groups full moral consideration and agency because of their difference. Othering enables those in power to create moral distance which allows them to overlook or ignore their connections and obligations to those that deserve moral attention." (Gruen, 2011:200,201). Thus, a moral distance is created between the "Other" and the group with the power to other (or the "Self"), allowing them to overlook and ignore their moral obligations towards the "Other". In other words, it justifies a differential and unequal treatment based on arbitrary reasoning. "Othering" can thereby be considered as oppressive attitudes and practices directed towards […] marginalized groups that are themselves expressions of power and privilege (Gruen, 2011:202). These marginalized groups can also take the form of the non-human animal other, as will be developed later on. Once again, the element of social power is also embedded in the process of othering, just as with the concept of oppression.

3.5 Hegel's self-consciousness and the concept of "Other"

The concept of "Other" brought to life through the process of "othering" can be traced all the way back to Hegel's master-slave dialectic. He was one of the first to identify this process in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), which influenced many thinkers working with the concept of oppression, such as Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (which will be discussed at a later moment in this paper) and Axel Honneth's theory of recognition (1995), to name a few. Hegel's origin of (human) self-consciousness (in a grossly simplified nutshell), begins the moment man[3] says "I", indicating a profound discursive element to self-consciousness and, as

[3] These are his words.

we shall see, to "othering" as well. This is because self-consciousness is revealed by speech[4]. Man is pushed to say "I" via what Hegel terms "desire", more specifically the desire for recognition or the desire for "pure prestige" (Kojève, 1980:5). The "I" only really becomes "I" (a real human being) when recognized by another (or better yet by all) human being(s) (Kojève, 1980:9). Hegel's theory of self-consciousness is, as Jensen points out: "a theory of self and other in which the juxtaposition towards the other constitutes the self." (Jensen, 2011:64). Furthermore (and more importantly), the "I" and the "non-I" are radically opposed to one-another; as a result, the non-I appears as hostile to the I, as Kojève points out: "the I […] is essentially different from, and radically opposed to, the non-I" (Kojève, 1980:3). This hostility is what leads to the "fight to the death for pure prestige" whereby one must "impose itself on the other as supreme value" (Kojève, 1980:7). Evidently, the denial of moral consideration toward the "Oher", who is considered as inferior, is patent in Hegel's self-consciousness[5]. The fight for pure prestige is what is known as the Master-Slave dialectic.

The relationship between the "I" and the "non-I" is profoundly unequal, both in its origin –as both see each other as sub-human, and therefore not worthy of moral consideration– and in its asymmetrical result whereby the Master becomes recognized but will not recognize the one who recognizes them (i.e. the Slave). As a result, the Slave keeps their status as animal or "thing" (due to misrecognition) and the Master gains the status of "human" through recognition (Kojève, 1980:16). Through these two statuses, Hegel implies that the category of "human" is not a biological one, but rather a social construct that depends on recognition and discourse. To be clear, asymmetrical recognition is not the only result of this "fight to the death". The two consciousnesses may decide not to enter a "fight for pure prestige", in which case they both leave one another indifferently as things (and therefore none acquire the "objective" status of "human"); or alternatively they may engage in mutual recognition (although this mutual recognition is usually the result of the Master-Slave dialectic whereby the Slave re-enters the "fight for the death" he abandoned initially when becoming a Slave), which is the normatively desired outcome. The importance of recognition is a very interesting dimension for the process of "othering" and thus for oppression.

[5] For the sake of clarity, I have chosen to include the original citation: "When the "first" two men confront one another for the first time, the one sees in the other only an animal (and a dangerous and hostile one et that) that is to be destroyed, and not a self-conscious being representing an autonomous value." (Kojève, 1980:10).

All the above considered, in Hegel's dialectic, both Master *and* Slave are the "Other" (or "non-I") for one another. More contemporary accounts of othering, however, take into account power structures and discourses present in society (something lacking in Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic as it is still unclear why or how one becomes master or slave; Hegel simply posits that the slave accepts his condition as slave because they do not enter in the fight for pure prestige all the while neglecting to consider *why* the slave doesn't, or perhaps *can't,* enter in the fight). Thus, more contemporary accounts would argue that the only "Other" is the "Slave", as they do not have the discursive power to "other" the "Master". This will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

3.6 More complex accounts on othering: de Beauvoir and Spelman

Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*– although strongly influenced by Hegel –is one account that is more mindful of power dynamics in the process of "othering". More specifically, she shows that "othering" depends on the contextual power to define the "Other". In her case, the "Other" is "women", "othered" by and for the contextually empowered men. Although Simone de Beauvoir is more aware of power dynamics in her process of "othering", she still falls in the same trap as Hegel's "accepting slave". In other words, she declares that women somehow and at some point, accepted their inferior and subordinate position that was imposed on them by men. Although she gives some ideas as to why this might have been, such as the property implications of the agricultural revolution, she nevertheless paints women out to be accepting of their fate (instead of conditioned or forced into it). With that said, de Beauvoir brings three important ideas to the concept of "other": 1) the discursive power of definition, 2) essentialism (of the "Oher"), 3) defining the "self" as the norm and objectivity and, finally, 4) social construction vs biological fact.

Building upon Hegel's hostility towards the "Other", she affirms that the "Self" (or subject) is created and exists solely in opposition (to an "Other"). This opposition results in the "Self" affirmed as essential, all the while constituting and creating the "Other" as inessential, or as an object (de Beauvoir, 1949:19). Thus, in defining the "Self" ("Same" or "Us"), one simultaneously defines the other. She makes this clear in the following passage:

> *« Aucune collectivité ne se définit jamais comme Une sans immédiatement poser l'Autre en face de soi. […] les Juifs sont « des autres » pour l'antisémite, les Noirs pour les racistes [américains], les indigènes pour les colons, les prolétaires pour les classes possédantes. »*
>
> – de Beauvoir, 1949:19

Simultaneously defining "Self" and "Other" is noted by many other thinkers. To name a few, Fatima El-Tayeb implies that the creation of a European Identity simultaneously creates a non-European other (El-Tayeb, 2011:2,3) and Elizabeth Spelman affirms that "when philosophers talk about "man's nature", we might assume they really are talking about woman' nature as well." (Spelman, 1988:7). It is important to note de Beauvoir's emphasis on essentializing in the process of "othering" whereby the "Other" becomes inessential and objectified. Inspired by de Beauvoir, Elizabeth Spelman worked on clarifying this concept in her *Inessential Woman* (1988). Essentialism implies an element of pureness. In the case of women, for instance, all women would share something (pure, core, essence) in common that makes them "women". Consequentially, to be essentially woman, one must be stripped of any characteristic that is not considered part of "womanhood" (such as race, class, sexuality); in *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir shows that women are stripped of any characteristic considered as "man" i.e. rationality, autonomy, etc. This is especially relevant with regards to her comments on Aristotle who considered women as an inferior "Other" due to a *lack* of (male) qualities, notably the lack of rationality (de Beauvoir, 1974:17). Thus, essentialism is important in justifying the moral inferiority of the "other". This is central to de Beauvoir's argumentation in *The Second Sex*, whereby women are the "Other" and, as "other", are essentialized by men:

> *« L'humanité est mâle et l'homme définit la femme non en soi mais relativement à lui ; elle n'est pas considérée comme un être autonome. […] Et elle n'est rien d'autre que ce que l'homme en décide ; […] elle est l'inessentiel en face de l'essentiel. Il est le Sujet, il est l'Absolu : elle est l'Autre. »*
>
> – de Beauvoir, 1949:17

In this process of "othering" (and essentializing), de Beauvoir points out that men are considered as the norm, the starting point and the point of measure or comparison. They are considered "positive" and "neutral" to such a degree that when referring to the human species ("les êtres humains") we often revert to the term "Mankind" ("les hommes") instead of "humans" (De Beauvoir, 1949:16); terms that are, to this day, still quite widespread in both the English and French language. De Beauvoir affirms that men believe that they see the world objectively all the while omitting their subjective standing *as men*. This idea is especially reflected in the terms "man" or "mankind", whereby the absolute (or essential) type of human is the masculine type. Furthermore, as the "absolute" human, their ("masculine") perception of the world is considered as normal and objective (De Beauvoir, 1949:16,17). Thus, their subjective standing is rendered completely invisible, and is instead taken as objectivity. What

is considered as the norm for men (notably white middle class men) is universalized as the norm for all. De Beauvoir makes this point abundantly explicit in a footnote when criticizing Levinas:

> *« Quand il [Lévinas] écrit que la femme est mystère, il sous-entend qu'elle est mystère pour l'homme. Si bien que cette description qui se veut objective est en fait une affirmation du privilège masculin »*
>
> – De Beauvoir, 1949:18 (footnote)

This echoes Sally Haslanger's "On being objective and being objectified" where she demonstrates the flaws in what we consider "objectivity". She reveals not only that objectivity, rationality, and reason marginalizes and silences women, but also that they are not human ideals but rather masculine ones. Building on Mackinnon's *Feminism Unmodified* (1987), she argues that the "one who objectifies another has the power to enforce compliance with his view of them" (Haslanger, 2002:225). This is achieved and maintained, on the one hand, through essentializing objects (people) on the basis of what they (the Self) consider to be their (the Object or "Other" 's) "true nature", and on the other, through the accepted norms of objective distance and neutrality. She thus challenges Western commitments to rational ideals that she deems oppressive considering that "the dominant participant's real power is a necessary condition for objectification." (Haslanger, 2002:225). As a result, extending the masculine ideal to all implies not only that everyone should occupy the (oppressive) social role that was once granted only to men, but also that men are the model that everyone should emulate.

Finally, de Beauvoir highlights that women are not only essentialized *by* men but also *for* men. Indeed, in the process of othering, women are reduced to their *function* in the world, or in other words their function in the world *according to men*, in terms of, for instance, reproduction, care takers, and so on. In her words:

> *« C'est dire que selon lui [Michel Carrouges] la femme n'a pas d'existence pour soi ; il considère seulement sa fonction dans le monde mâle. »*
>
> – De Beauvoir, 1949:29 (footnote)

Thus, women as a category of "Other" are socially constructed by the "Self" that perceives them. In the case of de Beauvoir, the "Self" are men. However, Spelman would argue that women too can be that "Self", notably white middle class women. For her, there are many categories of women as "Other". Just like with Hegel, de Beauvoir's demonstrates that the category of "Other" is not biological, even though it often relies on biological justifications ("true nature"). In the case of women, the social construction of women often bears the function of reproduction even though not all women are able to carry out this function. Thus, they may have a uterus and be "biologically" women (considered as female) but may not actually be

considered as women by society (gender). De Beauvoir points this out with the case of menopausal women who, some say, should constitute a third sex since they no longer enter in the categories of "men" nor "women" (De Beauvoir, 1974:71). This biological element in "othering" is also present in the case of people of colour who were considered biologically similar to monkeys or even the Jews who were considered as a biologically and genetically different race, especially during the Third Reich.

3.7 More complex accounts on othering: Spivak

The importance of power structures in the process of othering is especially prevalent in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "The Rani of Sirmur" (1985) where she analyses three dimensions of "othering" in Colonial India. The first dimension "is about power, making the subordinate aware of who holds the power, and hence about the powerful producing the other as subordinate." (Jensen, 2011:64). This reflects the previous paragraphs on de Beauvoir's power of definition, notably when Spivak writes about "the force to make the "native" see himself as "other."" (Spivak, 1985:254). This leads to the second dimension: "constructing the other as pathological and morally inferior." (Jensen, 2011:65). As mentioned earlier, the absence of moral obligations is central to the concept of "othering". The final dimension of "othering" is knowledge and science as belonging to the powerful "Self". In Spivak's words: "The master is the subject of science or knowledge" (Spivak, 1985:256). Thus, as they are in this position of power, they are able to create knowledge that justifies inequalities: "The manipulation of the pedagogy of this science is also in the "interest" of creating what will come to be perceived as a "natural" difference between the "master" and the "native"" (Spivak, 1985:256). This strongly echoes de Beauvoir's emphasis on men as the norm or objectivity, as well as Haslanger's "On being objective and being objectified". Finally, Spivak highlights that the multidimensional process of othering in the case of the Rani is classed, raced and gendered (Jensen, 2011:65). Thus, Spivak's demonstrates that othering can be combined with intersectionality. Certainly, there is a strong intersectional dimension to the process of othering, and thus to oppression as a whole. The process of othering of one group can depend on and be reinforced by the othering of "Other" groups. Thus, the oppression "Others" face interacts with other oppressions. As Spivak illustrates, the Rani of Sirmur face different types of oppression that work together in unison and depend on one another in order to mould, immobilize, and reduce them. As shall be developed later, this is not unique to the Rani. This echoes Haslanger's

affirmation that "gender oppression does not typically occur in isolation from other forms of oppression" (Haslanger, 2002:213).

3.8 More complex accounts on othering: Jensen and Staszack

Adding to the importance of power structures in the process of "othering", Jensen demonstrates that identity formation is central to "othering" on two levels: "Firstly, the idea that the power to construct identity lies with the powerful (this also mirrors Haslanger's "on being objective and being objectified"). Secondly, the idea that identity formation can be grasped as a dichotomous relation between self/first and other." (Jensen, 2011:63). This idea is also supported by Staszack who claims that "Otherness and identity are two inseparable sides of the same coin. The Other only exists relative to the Self, and vice versa." (Staszack, 2008:2). Furthermore, Jensen argues that the importance of identity in the process of "othering" is stressed by Jacques Lacan. The latter affirms on the one hand, that "language plays a central role in constituting identity" and on the other, that "identity is fundamentally gained in the gaze of the powerful" (Jensen, 2011:64). Similarly, Staszack claims that "otherness belongs to the realm of discourse" (Staszack, 2008:2); both he and Jensen consider "othering" as a discursive process[6].

Finally, both Jensen and Staszack agree that "asymmetry in power relationships is central to the construction of otherness" (Staszack, 2008:2). More specifically, Jensen notes that "it is the centre that has the power to describe, and the other is constructed as inferior. […] The other is always the other as in *inferior*" (Jensen, 2011:65). Staszack supports this idea by affirming that only the dominant group is in a position to impose their "Self" value or identity all the while devaluing the "otherness" of "Others" (Staszack, 2008:2). In order to do so, "a dominant group defines into existence an inferior group" by reducing and essentializing them into stereotypical characters and ultimately dehumanizing them (Jensen, 2011:65). Othering is thus a (discursive) process problematizing "differentiation and demarcation, by which the line is drawn between 'us' and 'them – between the more and less powerful –" as well as defining the "Other" as morally and/or intellectually inferior (Jensen, 2011:65). This asymmetry of power is especially interesting when we realize that, although an opposition is created between

[6] In Staszack's words: *"Otherness is the result of a discursive process by which a dominant in-group ("Us," the Self) constructs one or many dominated out-groups ("Them," Other) by stigmatizing a difference – real or imagined – presented as a negation of identity and thus a motive for potential discrimination. […] The creation of otherness (also called othering) consists of applying a principle that allows individuals to be classified into two hierarchical groups: them and us."* (Staszack, 2008:2)

"Self" and "Other", this does not mean that they are actually opposites: "if the Other of Man is Woman, and if the Other of the White Man is the Black Man, the opposite is not true" (Staszack, 2008:2). Thus, the "Self" can never be the "Other" of the "Other" as they lack the ability (and power) to define themselves as "Self", and hence prescribe their own norms.

3.9 "Othering", key characteristics

From what has been discussed above, there are a few characteristics that stand out concerning "othering". The first is the discursive element inherent to the process of othering. Every academic mentioned in this paper has touched upon this issue. In other words, creating a discursive image about what "I" am, automatically defines what "I" am not, and therefore what "Others" are. This discursive element is embedded in power relations, which is the second characteristic. Although overlooked by Hegel, these power relations are central to "othering" as they determine who (or which group) has the discursive power or self-definition as well as the power to define the "Other(s)". Self-definition implies the power to define the "Self" as the norm and that this (the "Self"s") viewpoint is objective. Consequentially, the true and only form of knowledge is one that is in line with the "norm"'s definition of objectivity. Moreover, the "Other", when compared to the "norm", is stereotyped, objectified, and essentialized. This can be understood as press, mould, and reduce an "Other". As a result, the "Other" becomes the impure or inessential form of the "Self", thereby justifying the moral irrelevance of the "Other" perceived by the "Self".

Conceiving of "othering" in this way illustrates its uncanniness to the definition of oppression mentioned earlier. Indeed, oppression is considered in structural and relational terms in-so-far as that, through a collection of barriers, one group moulds, immobilizes and reduces another or "Others". In Iris Marion Young's words: "Oppression in this sense is structural, rather than the result of a few people's choices or policies" (Young, 2006: 4). As a result, structural oppression cannot be eradicated by new laws or removing rulers "because oppressions are systematically reproduced in major economic, political, and cultural institutions" (Young, 2006: 4). Furthermore, and as mentioned by Staszack, this "systemic character of oppression" doesn't result in an oppressed group with a correlating oppressing group like that of Marx's Bourgeoisie and Proletariat, but rather that "for every oppressed group there is a group that is *privileged* in relation to that group" (Young, 2006: 5). "Othering" can thus be understood as a foundation tool in the arsenal of oppression, for it is the discursive

element present in "othering" that leads to the creation of barriers that collectively form an oppressive structure.

Matsuda details four characteristics of oppression that eloquently sum up the discussion on oppression as well as its pre-condition, "othering":

> *"- All forms of oppression involve taking a trait, X, which often carries with it a cultural meaning, and using X to make some group the "other" and to reduce their entitlements and power.*
>
> *- All forms of oppression benefit someone, and sometimes both sides of a relationship of domination will have some stake in its maintenance.*
>
> *- All forms of oppression have both material and ideological dimensions. The articles on health, socioeconomics, and violence in this symposium show how subordination leaves scars on the body. This damage is real. It is material. These articles also speak of ideology. Language, including the language of science, law, rights, necessity, free markets, neutrality, and objectivity can make subordination seem natural and inevitable, justifying material deprivation.*
>
> *- All forms of oppression implicate a psychology of subordination that involves elements of sexual fear, need to control, hatred of self and hatred of others.*
>
> *As we look at these patterns of oppression, we may come to learn, finally and most importantly, that* ***all forms of subordination are interlocking and mutually reinforcing****."*
>
> –Matsuda, 1991: 1188, 1189 (My emphasis).

The point I would like to stress is that, just as demonstrated in the case of the Rani of Sirmur, oppression is inherently intersectional and relies on other oppressions and processes of othering to create or maintain itself, other oppressions and oppression as a whole.

4. The non-human animal as "other"

4.1 Applying the process of "othering" to non-human animals

Considering that humans *are* animals, the "animal"/human divide must not be based on biology but rather human culture and history (in this case "Western culture"), especially considering that some humans and non-human animals find themselves on different sides of this human/"animal" barrier in different cultures and in different points in time. The "animal" other and the subsequent lack of moral consideration to their regard dates back from ancient Greece, to Judeo-Christian thought, to the Renaissance and Enlightenment, and even to contemporary thought, including some scientific research (see Gruen, 2011, Sanbonmatsu, 2011 and DeMello, 2012). In DeMello's words: "once they [animals] are incorporated into

human social worlds they are assigned to human categories, often based on their use to humans, and it is these categories (lab animal, pet and livestock) that shape not only how the animals are seen but also how they are used and treated." (DeMello, 2012: 10). As mentioned in the previous section, othering creates a moral distance between those in power (those with privilege, the "Self") and those who are considered different (with regards to the "Self"). As a result of their difference they are denied full moral consideration and agency, as Gruen notes: "Othering enables those in power to create moral distance which allows them to overlook or ignore their connections and obligations to those that deserve moral attention." (Gruen, 2011:200,201). The process of othering non-human animals is the same as mentioned above and is elegantly expressed by Gruen: "Non-human animals […] serve a conceptual role in helping us define ourselves as human. We are not them. It is against the animal that we define humanity. Their differences from us highlight our similarity to other humans." (Gruen, 2011:2). Thus, as Bell notes, "the identity of that which is human is established only in relation to non-identity with the animal" (Bell, 164:2011). In other words, humans create themselves in opposition to what they consider the "animal" to be. As a result, "much of human culture–especially recent culture–is built upon the assumption that humans are *not* like animals" (DeMello, 2012: 32). This assumption known as "human exceptionalism", "ethical humanism" (DeMello, 2012:383) or even "Western Anthropocentrism" (Bell,171:2011) creates an "animal"/human divide which results in "[…] the view that we do not have ethical responsibilities to other animals" (Gruen, 2011:2). In Lori Gruen's words: "[human exceptionalism results, in part, from the way we psychologically and intellectually distance ourselves from our own animal natures, and by extension, from other animals. Our humanity is distinct from, and some even suggest, transcends, our animality" (Gruen, 2011:2). This "animal"/human divide[7] can also be understood as "speciesism" or the differential valuing of humans and non-human animals (DeMello, 2012: 36). For the sake of clarity, speciesism is a term coined by Richard D. Ryder in the 1970's in order to identify the form of prejudice based on who is "in" and who is "out" of the species boundary (Gruen, 2011:53). The term was then popularized by Peter Singer who defines it as follows:

> *"the attitude that we may call "speciesism," by analogy with racism, must also be condemned: Speciesism- the word is not an attractive one, but I can think of no better term-is a prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species"*

[7] The term itself implies the accomplished transcendence of humans over their animality to the point where the idea of humans as an animal species completely disappears.

–Singer, 2002:6[8]

The main arguments justifying speciesism, "animal"/human divide or the simple process of "othering" of non-human animals are the ideas of rationality, language, agency, morality, and the soul. As mentioned in the previous section, many of these arguments have already been used to justify the inferiority of other groups of humans. Although all of these preconceived ideas about non-human animals can be rejected thanks to many studies on "animal" behaviour, they are still ever-present in western society even today. Indeed, it is still believed that: "The animal has no language, no tools, no history" (Bell, 167:2011). Let's now turn our attention to these arguments.

4.2 Aristotle

One of the most notable philosophers was Aristotle, given that his views on non-human animals have heavily influenced later thinkers (DeMello, 2012:379). In *Politics* (1932) he affirms that "*man's*" capacity for ethical reasoning fundamentally distinguishes him from the "*animal*"; more specifically it distinguishes humans from non-humans and slaves from non-slaves. It is, in fact, the ability to speak that he considers the basis for human's ethical existence. Aristotle argues that intelligence, language, self-awareness and agency give humans alone the basic rights of life and freedom from persecution and pain, as well as the right to control non-human animals (DeMello, 2012: 41). Furthermore, borrowing the concept of soul from the Egyptians, Aristotle divides the soul into three parts or "capacities": the nutritive, which corresponds to the soul of plants whose sole purpose in life is nutrition, reproduction, and existence; the sensitive, which in addition to the nutritive constitutes the soul of non-human animals whose purpose is the same as plants but with the additional goal of the satiation of bodily senses; and finally, the rational, which combined with the other two creates the human soul (Sorabji, 1974:60, 63). Thus, non-human animals exist on a lower natural hierarchy due to their lack of reason. This justifies their use by humans, as Gruen demonstrates: "This natural hierarchy, he [Aristotle] believed, gave those on higher rungs both the right and the responsibility to use those on the lower rungs" (Gruen, 2011:2). According to her, the Stoics went even farther than Aristotle and "denied that animals had any capacity for thought and existed solely to be used" (Gruen, 2011:2). Evidently, then, there is no room for any moral consideration directed towards non-human animals according to Aristotle. Their difference (status as "other") justifies their ill-treatment. Furthermore, Aristotle's use of "Man" instead of

[8] Many have revamped the concept of speciesism; see, for instance, James Rachels (1990).

"human" demonstrates that his arguments justifying the "animal"/human divide does not apply to other humans who are not considered as "man", such as slaves, women, etc. Thus, the ill-treatment of other humans is justified on the basis of their similarity to "animals", i.e., their lack of rationality.

4.3 Judeo-Christian thought

Borrowing from Greek thought, notably Aristotle's concept and hierarchy of the soul and his concept of higher consciousness, Judeo-Christian thought reveres both human exceptionalism and human superiority over animals: "Early Christian theologians, […] also viewed animals as fundamentally distinct from humans in that they lacked souls and were here just to satisfy human ends" (Gruen, 2011:3). This statement rings especially true in the Book of Genesis: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis I:26 The King James Bible). St. Augustine furthers this point in the fourth and fifth centuries by arguing that humans are of value because of their link to the divine, a link that neither animals nor women share for that matter (DeMello, 2012:37, 379). The lack of a divine link justifies the lack of moral consideration to non-human animals. Furthermore, Aristotle's natural hierarchy and the "biblical idea that God created all of life on earth and that life could be ranked–from lowest to highest, with man as the most perfect of all life on earth." (Demello, 2012: 350) inspired Carolus Linnaeus to affirm a hierarchy of higher-lower beings in *Systema Naturae* (1735), whereby man sits below God, and "animals" below the man. This is known as the "Great chain of being" or *scala naturae* and was the first scientific categorization of all life. This idea was later contradicted by Charles Darwin's theory of evolution that posited the existence of life on a spectrum rather than in a hierarchy (DeMello, 2012:41).

Finally, building on Aristotle's emphasis on rationality, St. Thomas Aquinas (2012) further reinforced the human-animal divide in the eleventh century by arguing the distinction of "persons with reason" who are intrinsically valuable (due to their reason which gives them immortal souls) and "non-persons" who are only instrumentally valuable as means to an end for "persons". As DeMello explains, "persons are persons because they are rational" (DeMello, 2012: 38). Consequentially, he argues that it is the destiny of "nonpersons" (from women, to slaves, to animals, to inanimate objects) to serve persons. Christian teachings, based on Aristotle's work on the soul, affirm that non-human souls are not eternal as they lack reason,

intelligence, and thus, morality. As a result, any person who acts immorally is compromising their divine link with God, and thus is considered as animal-like or beastly (since animals have no divine link to God). Considering that, as mentioned earlier, animality is believed to be inferior, or the lower side of human nature, it is thus something to be overcome or conquered by man. The focus on personhood not only defines non-human animals as "other" (and thus excludes them from the scope of moral obligations), but also other *humans* themselves who are considered as "other". Indeed, the idea of "personhood" is distinguishable from the idea of "human" (Gruen, 2011:56). Rather than defining the "human", "The notion of "personhood" is used to identify the value or worth of someone, and it has also been used to identify who has "rights" and who is the subject of ethical duties and obligations" (Gruen, 2011:57). Thus, the lack of the status of personhood results in a lack of moral obligations towards that being which justifies their ill-treatment.

4.4 Renaissance and Enlightenment

The emphasis on human exceptionalism only reinforced itself with the philosophers of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment such as Descartes and Kant who built upon Aristotle's ideas of rationality and language. René Descartes for instance, considered as the "father of modern philosophy", argued (in the same direction as Kant and Judeo-Christian thought) that non-human animals are incapable of using language, and thus considered them as living machines who respond automatically to stimuli without actually being aware of the stimuli: "Their lack for reason, thoughts, consciousness, and souls corresponds with their lack of moral standing. We don't have ethical relationships with alarm clocks, toasters, or cell phones and we don't have ethical relationships with other animals" (Gruen, 2011:3). Thus, he viewed that, contrary to non-human animals, "humans have minds and are thus ensouled beings who have moral standing, while other animals are merely bodily, mechanical creatures here for us to use as we want" (Gruen, 2011:3). The influence of Aristotle's hierarchy of the soul is undeniable, whereby the animal soul considered as bodily and seeking the fulfilment of their senses is on a lower grade to the human soul, which is rational, capable of higher thought and consciousness. Descartes, however, doesn't even consider non-human animals as soul-possessing, which combined with their lack of reason and language justifies using animals as a means to an end.

A century after Descartes, Immanuel Kant (1998) argued that animals lack both rationality and autonomy and thus the ability to make rational moral choices. As a result, non-human animals are not moral agents, have no intrinsic value and have no moral standing.

Furthermore, humans do not owe them any moral consideration since, according to Kant, animal's lack of autonomy denies them the capacity to engage in relationships[9] with others, as well as fulfil reciprocal obligations: "Humans are not obligated towards beings that cannot themselves have obligations" (DeMello, 2012:381). With that said, Kant is vehemently against harming non-human animals, not out of consideration for the animal per-se, but rather out of concern for the impact these actions have on society as a whole: "when a non-human animal is tortured, the harm to the animal is not what matters from an ethical point of view but rather the harm that reflects on the torturer and the society to which the torturer belongs" (Gruen, 2011:4)

Even Hegel, whose contributions have been essential to this paper, cannot escape the "animal"/human divide. Indeed, his arguments on understanding human consciousness are engrained in the initial premise that humans are not like "animals" and are incapable of language:

> *"[Man is Self-Conscious. He is conscious of himself, conscious of his human reality and dignity; and it is in this that* ***he*** ***is essentially different from animals****, which do not go beyond the level of simple Sentiment of self. Man becomes conscious of himself at the moment when –for the "first" time– he says "I". To understand man by understanding his "origin", is therefore, to* ***understand the origin of I revealed by speech****."*
>
> – Kojève, 1980:3 (my emphasis)

Furthermore, he never questions what it means to see someone as *only* an animal (i.e. not human) and the subsequent justified treatment of that person.

> *"When the "first" two men confront one another for the first time, the one sees in the other only an animal (and a dangerous and hostile one at that) that is to be destroyed, and not a self-conscious being representing an autonomous value."*
>
> – Kojève, 1980:10

For Hegel, to see someone as an "animal" (or *only* an "animal") results in perceiving a being that is not self-conscious and has no autonomous value.

4.5 A case against human exceptionalism

The perception of non-human animals as "other" and devoid of moral consideration reflects Adorno's infamous proclamation: "Auschwitz begins whenever someone looks at a slaughterhouse and thinks: they're only animals" (Adorno in Patterson, 2002:53). By extension,

[9] Considering of non-human animals as oppressed would therefore be impossible from a Kantian perspective as oppression implies a relationship between oppressor and oppressed.

"The denial of significance of the other's suffering because she is "only an animal" is inextricably linked to indifference because she is "only" a woman, a black, a Jew, and so on." (Bell, 2011:172). The ability to "other" based on the criterion of rationality (among others) enables not only the creation of the "animal"/human divide, but also the ability to categorize other humans as "animal" based on this criterion. Derrida, Adorno, and Horkheimer all challenged the idea of the "animal"/human divide, especially with regards to Kantianism and other philosophies of the Enlightenment (see Horkheimer & Adorno, 1947/2002). They all dedicated many of their works to recognizing the interwoven history between humans and non-human animals: "We have not ceased to be animals, and will never cease to be[.] […] To refute and insult the animal in the human is to exile humans to an impossible pedestal, one from which it can fulminate and rain violence against that which it deems inferior." (Mendieta, 2011:153). The analysis of the process of othering non-human animals and its implications when extended to other humans is central to this paper. However, instead of Bell's "Animal is to Kantianism as Jew is to Fascism", I would argue that "Animal is to speciesism as Jew is to Fascism", as the "animal"/human divide pre-dates ideas issued from Kantianism.

Many have argued in the same direction as Adorno, Horkheimer and Derrida, against the premise of human exceptionalism. Philosophers such as Pythagoras in ancient Greece, Renaissance/Enlightenment philosophers such as Voltaire (1765), (1775/1984) and Jeremy Bentham (1781), and finally contemporary theorists and theories such as Peter Singer's (1975) utilitarianism, Tom Regan's "rights approach" (1983), Josephine Donovan and Carol Adams' (1996) "feminist ethic of care", and even Martha Nussbaum's (2004) take on Amartya Sen's (1992) capabilities approach (and many more), are all examples such a defence. Despite these efforts, the prevalence of human exceptionalism still remains strong to this day.

4.6 The (social) construction of the non-human animal

The "animal"/human divide misleadingly creates an essential category of the non-human animal, when there obviously exist many different categories of "animal" in Western society. Once non-human animals are incorporated into human social worlds, DeMello points out, "Animals are defined through human linguistic categories–pet, livestock, and working animal– and those categories themselves are related to how the animal is used by humans. In addition, these categories are often spatially located: in the house, on the farm, in the lab, on television, in the 'wild', etc." (DeMello, 2012: 15). Thus, the classification or social construction of non-human animals defines their spatial location in human society (where they

live), their function or use for humans, which in turn conditions the degree of the relationship between humans and non-human animals as well as how the latter are treated. Their spatial location can be as much a physical place in the world as an imaginary abstract one. For instance, non-human animals exist on the internet, in myths, religions, as well as in language through the use of metaphors and idioms, such as "it's raining cats and dogs", "going on a wild goose chase", "busy as a bee", etc. Furthermore, and building on post-intersectionality theory, the categories of non-human animals create dual positions of dominant and subordinate, as DeMello remarks: "[…] these classifications are not neutral–they are politically charged in that they serve to benefit some (humans, some animals) at the expense of others (other animals)." (DeMello, 2012: 10). Let's take a look at these classifications in greater detail.

4.7 Pets

When non-human animals are classified as pets, they are often anthropomorphised to the point of being considered "surrogate humans". Hence, the species boundary between "animal" and "human" becomes shaky, especially when pets become like surrogate children (accompanied with phrases such as "he's my baby" when referring to one's pet). Pets live in homes, have names, and complete the function of companions as well as empathy socializers for children. Thus, they enjoy a very intimate relationship with humans. Deciding which animal is considered as a pet is culturally and historically contingent. In Western society the most common are dogs, cats, rodents such as rabbits, guinea pigs, and hamsters, gold fish, etc. However, exotic pets are also becoming more and more popular in the west, especially due to "new media" from movies like "Finding nemo" (Bush, Baker & Macdonald, 2014:664) as well as the growing "pet community" on YouTube. Emily Voigt (2016) affirms that the exact number of exotic pets owned is unknown due to the imprecise definition of "exotic". However, the fact that they are believed to live in more American homes than in American zoos gives an indication of the popularity of "exotics". These include mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, arachnids, and many species of saltwater and freshwater fish. Moreover, fish comprise the vast majority of exotic pets today and is one of the most profitable industries in the pet trade (Voigt, 2016: 13). The Unites States alone imports the most pet fish of any country in the world, with more than one hundred million fish swimming in aquariums in American homes.

4.8 Livestock

Non-human animals can also be classified as livestock. The species boundary is very strong in this case as these are the beings that become our food. The relationships entertained with these non-human animals differs between the farmer, slaughterhouse worker or consumer. All of them, however, require a form of mental gymnastics in order to accept the inevitable killing and death of the non-human animal. For instance, the use of the term "livestock", literally meaning live currency, as well as the lack of naming of these non-human animals, aids in creating that mental distance (DeMello, 2012:130). Rather than being sentient beings, livestock are transformed into objects with which humans have no personal relationship. As a result, they are not only absent referents from the act of meat eating (see Adams, 2010), but also from society in general. Livestock are located on farms and end their lives in slaughterhouses far away from human society (or at least urban society). As an example, I've lived my whole life in a small town located in the countryside of Switzerland (La Côte), completely unaware of the slaughterhouse a kilometre away. Geographically, it is not removed from human society, but in practice it is rendered completely invisible. Moreover, livestock are completely dependent on humans for their survival due to their selective breeding as docile and submissive creatures over millennia. Just as pets who have been domesticated, they are completely helpless without human care. Likewise, humans are also dependent on livestock for food (although this dependency –especially men's necessity for meat– is up for debate; see Adams, 2010). To be clear, this dependency isn't viewed as a dependency but rather a basic human right (to food) as shown by article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948: Article 25). Thus, the relationship between the non-human animal (livestock) and the human (consumer) is virtually non-existent; instead of being viewed as sentient beings, livestock, when transformed (or rather slaughtered) to (become) meat, are viewed as food to which humans have a basic human right. Although there is a reciprocal relationship of dependency, there is an asymmetrical relationship of power. Indeed, humans decide the inevitable fate of livestock leading to a much shorter existence than their "natural" lifespan provides. They also decide where they live, how they live (their living conditions) and how they *are* in terms of genetically desirable traits. Finally, like with pets, the category of livestock is culturally and historically contingent and hence must make economic and symbolic sense (see DeMello, 2012:126.145). Consequentially, in Western society it is completely unacceptable to eat humans (those who would engage in such an act as cannibalism are deemed lesser beings), as well as those beings who are on the fuzzier side of the human/"animal" divide,

notably cats, dogs, guinea pigs and for the United Kingdom and United States especially, horses[10]. Since pets are often seen as members of the family, eating them would be considered a form of cannibalism too. However, in other cultures, meat taboos are different; for instance, Hinduism's ban on cow consumption[11], pigs being considered *kashrut* in Judaism or *haram* in Islam, or the totally normal consumption of dogs in China and (both) Korea(s) and guinea pigs in Peru.

4.9 Lab-animals

This ambiguous relationship humans entertain with livestock through a process of mental gymnastics is also present with "lab animals". The testing of medications, surgical techniques, medical devices, cosmetics as well as research in experimental and comparative psychology, and classroom dissections, all of which are destined for human use, are all performed on these non-human animals. In many Western countries, the exact number of non-human animals tested on is not always known, especially since many non-human animals are not covered by the law. Switzerland's 2017 statistics, however, show that the vast majority of animal-testing is done on mice, fish, and rats (although dogs, cats, and rabbits –among many others– are also in the list) (OSAV, n.d.). These non-human animals are considered sufficiently similar in order for the tests to have any meaningful effect on humans (both in biological and psychological terms) yet sufficiently different in order to justify testing in the first place. For instance, research projects testing depression medication in mice can prove that the drug works (and therefore its applicability to humans is implied) all the while negating that mice *actually* experience depression due to the confinement, loneliness and lack of stimulation created by the researcher in the first place (DeMello, 2012:180). The lab-animal is thus de-animalized and transformed into a research model no longer representing their species but rather the human one. Furthermore, the researcher must create sufficient distance from their research subject in order for their research to be valid. As a result, instead of giving these non-human animals names, they are numbered. This combined with their identical appearance to the human eye transforms them into disposable and replaceable commodities. Their existence as an individual being is completely suppressed in order to study biological responses. Moreover, the language used in scientific studies accentuates this "objective detachment": lab animals are not killed but sacrificed, they do not bleed but haemorrhage (Birke, 2003). This is further supported by the

[10] This was made especially clear during the 2013 horse meat scandal.

[11] Although according to the United States Department of Agriculture India is the 4th largest exporter of meat, ranking just above Argentina (USDA, 2018:3).

guidelines elaborated in the 1920's by the *Journal of Experimental Medicine* that requires specific language be used in order to avoid descriptions of suffering and encourage impersonal medical terms (Gruen, 2011:109,110). In addition, they are absent in the occasional photos present in these articles that focus on bodily parts rather than the non-human animal subjects' whole body (DeMello, 2012:182). Consequentially, "[t]he individual living, feeling animal is what is known as the absent referent in scientific writing; it is absent from the text, yet it is the very animal being referred to" (DeMello, 2012:182). Just as live-stock, lab-animals exist in invisibile-ized spaces from the general public, have extremely detached (sometimes cruel) relationships with the humans they come into contact with, and are reduced to nothing more than a scientific model, their individuality and capacity for pain and suffering being irrelevant (unless studied in order to obtain a conclusion about humans).

4.10 Others

Finally, non-human animals exist as clothes (on fur farms, leather farms, etc.), sources of entertainment (in zoos, circuses, aquariums, marine parks, movies, racing, hunting, etc.), "working animals" (dogs and horses in the police force, therapy animals, guide dogs, etc.) and even in the "wild", outside of human societies. All of these non-human animals mentioned in this section can thus exist "out of place" or outside of society's prescribed place for them (Philo & Wilbert, 2000), such as stray cats and dogs, wild elephants trampling crops, wolves, bears, lynxes found roaming our streets escaping the "wild" or zoos, and even cows escaping the slaughterhouse.

4.11 The case of the rabbit

The domesticated rabbit (*Oryctolygus cuniculus*) is a good illustration for how powerful social constructions of non-human animals are. This same species exists in the wild in Europe, as pets in people's homes, as lab-animals in laboratories, as fur in the fashion industry (although this mostly applies to angora rabbits) and as meat in slaughterhouses. Like humans, they do not have a subspecies, thus all of these rabbits with different functions for human society share fundamentally the same genes (DeMello, 2012:45). The rabbit example makes it clear: it is not the rabbits' biology that defines them as pets, livestock, or lab-animals, but rather their function and place in society. Furthermore, their social construction is supported, maintained, and institutionalized through the law, and depending on how these non-humans are classified the law affects them differently in terms of their care and treatment. For instance, it would be illegal

and considered animal abuse to kill the pet rabbit, yet it is completely normal and legal to kill the lab rabbit or slaughter the farm rabbit for its meat (DeMello, 2012:45,46). Thus, the same species of non-human animal can occupy many different positions of subordination (and privilege relative to other rabbits) depending on their social construction.

4.12 Institutionalized speciesism, the Swiss example

In Switzerland, for instance, the categorization or social construction of non-human animals is institutionalized through many legal bases, notably the "Loi sur la protection des animaux de 2005" (LPA) and the "Ordonnance sur la protection des animaux 455.1 de 2008" (OPAn). True to the dominating ideology of human exceptionalism, the OPAn puts in place the framework by which humans can treat, detain, and *use* non-human animals:

> *"La présente ordonnance règle la manière de traiter, de détenir, d'utiliser les animaux, vertébrés, les céphalopodes et les décapodes marcheurs et de pratiquer des interventions sur eux."*
>
> – Chapter 1, Article 1 OPAn

Before the introduction of the OPAn in 2008, the LPA gave full power to the Federal Council to decide to which non-human animals the law applies to and to what degree, in Chapter 1 article 2. This creates a huge problem of arbitrary decision making concerning the fate of non-human animals if humans can freely decide what happens to specific non-human animals in specific circumstances without having to refer to any other legal base (and definitely reflects the lack of concern for non-human animals i.e. existing solely for humans). With the introduction of the OPAn, however, Chapter 1 article 2 (of the OPAn) clarifies the categories of vertebrates by distinguishing between "domesticated animals" (such as horses, cows and bulls, goats, sheep, pigs, rabbits, dogs, cats, pigeons, chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks and guinea fowls) and "wild animals" (all other vertebrates except domesticated animals, as well as cephalopods and walking decapods). These two categories are further defined by their use for humans: livestock, pets and lab animals; and as mentioned above, they decree differential care and treatment depending on the "category" of non-human animal. Thus, the Federal Council now must decide how the law applies to non-human animals all the while respecting the "basic rights" decreed to them by the OPAn.

We can thus understand Western society as upholding *institutional speciesism* in the same way that it has done with institutional racism: "[…] institutional racism refers to established customs, laws, and practices that systematically reflect and produce racial inequalities whether or not the individuals maintaining these practices have racist intentions"

(DeMello, 2012:238). Indeed, speciesist beliefs have blended into the institutions of society in order to mould, immobilize, and reduce the non-human animal to such a degree that we do not even realize that we do so. The stratification of society on the arbitrary basis of speciesism allows for the allocation of privileges and opportunities in favour of humans. This is known as the sociozoologic scale (see Arluke and Sanders, 1996) which "[…] categorizes and then ranks animals on the basis of their benefits to human society, which allows humans to define them, reinforce their position, and justify their interactions with other beings." In the following section, I will demonstrate how these categories of non-human animals face a combination of different types of oppression. For the sake of simplicity, I will be focusing on the categories of livestock, pets, and lab-animals. Let's take a look at these forms of oppression with the help of Iris Marion Young's five faces of oppression.

5. Non-human oppression through Young's Five Faces of Oppression

5.1 Iris Marion Young's criteria for oppression

Young establishes a criterion of five different types of oppression that can be experienced, alone or in conjunction, by different minority groups. It is because she rejects an essential definition of oppression that she argues in favour of the manifestation of oppression in different forms and combinations depending on the targeted group. Thus, she develops five categories that can describe the oppression of *any* group, as she notes: "[the] five faces of oppression [i]s a useful set of categories and distinctions which I believe is comprehensive, in the sense that it covers all the groups said to by new left social movement to be oppressed and all the ways they are oppressed" (Young, 2006: 5). Furthermore, "[t]he presence of any of these five conditions is sufficient for calling a group oppressed" (Young, 2006: 15). Thus, even if only one category of oppression is experienced, that is sufficient for a group to be objectively oppressed. Her five faces of oppression are not meant to compare oppressions in order to determine which group is the most oppressed, but rather to demonstrate how oppressions can interact with one another to form a particular experience of oppression for a specific group. Thus, just as in intersectional theory, oppression is not additive, but is a whole. Her five faces are characterized as follows:

> *"exploitation (essentially, having one's surplus labor extracted by another), marginalization (being expelled from useful participation in social life, including productive work), powerlessness (lack of autonomy and respectability), cultural imperialism (being subjected to universalized*

dominant group norms), and violence (existing in a social context that makes violence against one's group allowable or acceptable)."

–Young in Chang and Culp, 2002: 487-488.

Though Young's five faces of oppression are somewhat overly restricted to the impacts of the social division of labour on groups, it is perhaps the best vocabulary that exists as of now in order to conceptualize oppression. Thus, some of the criteria may have to be slightly altered in order for the concept of oppression to be extended to non-human animals who "have come to be regarded as an oppressed minority" (DeMello, 2012:14), and are considered as such in this paper. Young's five faces of oppression is particularly useful in providing an answer or vocabulary as to what constitutes oppression. More specifically, it functions "as criteria for determining whether individuals and groups are oppressed" (Young, 2006: 15). She argues that her criteria are objective, allowing for oppression to be measured objectively (via an objective analysis of the context –oppressive structures) by going beyond subjective assessment regardless of whether members of an oppressed group recognize their oppression. As a result, Young argues vehemently against the idea that one must subjectively identify one's self as, or feel, oppressed in order to actually *be* oppressed. As Gruen explains, "[…] though an individual woman may not identify her treatment as oppressive, the structures of oppression may nonetheless be present and those who perpetuate the structures continue to benefit from them, even in cases where the individuals being oppressed may also be said to benefit." (Gruen, 2014:286). Instead, Young argues that her criteria can disprove those who think they are oppressed, as well as support those who are, but think they aren't. I believe that this tool will be very useful in determining whether it is possible to consider non-human animals as (an) oppressed group(s). We will know detail the five faces of oppression as well as their application to non-human animals, notably livestock, lab-animals, and pets.

5.2 Exploitation

The first type of oppression Young terms "exploitation" is pretty straightforward and relates closely to Marx's theory of class exploitation. In Young's words, exploitation is the "steady process of the transfer of the results of the labour of one social group to benefit another." (Young, 2006: 6). For her, exploitation brings to life a structural relationship between social groups that is governed by social norms (Young, 2006: 6). These norms create relations of power and inequality in terms of what is considered work, who works for whom and who benefits from that work. Finally, she explains that "[t]hese relations are produced and reproduced through a systematic process in which the energies of have-nots are continuously

expanded to maintain and augment the power, status and wealth of the haves" (Young, 2006:6). In other words, "[…] this type of oppression occurs when one group systematically extracts the labour of another of benefit themselves and not the laborer" (Gruen, 2014:281). The exploitation of non-human animals for human gain is such a central element to how humans and non-human animals interact. Lab-animals, livestock, and to a certain degree, pets face oppression in terms of exploitation, and have for millennia. Dogs were domesticated for their use to humans in hunting, cattle as a sustainable food source and all kinds of domesticated animals in experiments for understanding the human body ever since the Antiquity. Thus, the exploitation of non-human animals has been systematically reproduced ever since their domestication.

Evidently, a lab-animals' existence is not considered work even though without them, researchers would be unable to conduct their studies. Moreover, not only can they face cruel conditions daily from the effects of medications, injections, isolation, etc., but the results of their exposure to these situations are destined strictly for human use. Similarly, livestock's contributions to human society are rarely considered work either and are always for the benefit of humans. Horses' or donkeys' use in human transportation is considered as a convenience rather than someone's labour. The use of livestock for ploughing fields is more readily perceived as work although it is also perceived as a convenience (for humans) as well. Livestock's existence and the transformation of their bodies in order to become food, however, is never considered as work. For instance, the female biological and reproductive labour by dairy cows, sows, and hens is not seen as such, and yet "their reproductive capacities are exploited in order to extract as much profitable product as possible" (Gruen, 2011:84). In factory farms, dairy cows can become excessively overworked to the point where they start to metabolize their own muscle in order to continue producing milk[12] as well as suffering infections in their udders leading to mastitis (a condition that breastfeeding humans can also suffer from) (Gruen, 2012:282). Similarly, sows are repeatedly artificially inseminated and confined to gestation stalls where they will give birth to piglets who will be removed after three weeks, rapidly fattened up, and sold for consumption (DeMello, 2012:134, Gruen, 2014:282). The efforts these mothers undergo to bring their young into the world and keep them alive through their milk in order for their bodies (and milk) to become food is unappreciated by the human, and yet solely for the benefit of the human. The same can be said for the exploitation

[12] This is also known as "milking off of their backs".

of pets in pet trade by breeders who overwork mothers in terrible conditions. Puppy mills are a good example and will be addressed in the section on violence.

Perhaps the reason for the lack of perceiving lab-animals', livestock's, and pet's work as work is due to the fact that they are *owned* by humans. They are considered as human property that humans use as they please. This definitely echoes the treatment of slaves (both men and especially women) during colonialism. Finally, Walter Hough (and many others) argue that human "civilization" or "progress" would not be what or where it is today without domesticated animals, notably livestock (Hough, 1934:144). Not only do they guarantee humans greater food security (to their detriment), they make farming more efficient through their labour, simplify transportation (at least before the industrial revolution), thereby contributing to the development of the modern economy.

5.3 Marginalization

The second type is termed "marginalization". Young defines marginals as "people the system of labour cannot or will not use" (Young, 2006: 8). Only considering this dimension of marginalization would mean that many non-human animals do not face this oppression. Livestock (and female livestock in particular) are beings the system of labour excessively exploits, as mentioned above; the same is true for lab-animals and pets. However, marginalization also consists of the exclusion of a category of people from useful participation in social life. The exclusion of non-human animals from useful participation in life can be understood as behaviours non-human animals typically express but that are hindered by human intervention such as, declawing cats for scratching furniture, de-barking dogs, or keeping lab-animals, livestock, and pets in enclosures that provide no stimulation or enrichment to their lives. Young's idea of useful participation in life is not only conceived of in economic terms but in political and cultural ones too. Consequentially, I would take this concept further to consider the spatial marginalization of social groups. Indeed, just as for exploitation, social norms are systematically reproduced to define *where* groups can exist and operate in society. The result is the seclusion or segregation of groups from social life. Thus, not only are marginals excluded from participation in social life (which goes beyond the "system of labour"), but they are also excluded from existing *in* social life. Their marginal status leads to their invisibility in society. All "types" of non-human animals are marginalized by humans with regards to their designed place in society. However, for lab-animals and livestock, their designated place is completely invisible from the general public. They are unable to participate in life in any way

due to the barriers that seclude them in (factory) farms or laboratories, which, as we shall see with "powerlessness", define their opportunities and autonomy (or lack thereof). This type of spatial segregation echoes Tommie Shelby's (2007) American "ghettos" or El-Tayeb's racial segregation in "global cities" whereby racial minorities are secluded to certain areas ("ghettos") that condition their opportunities in life (or lack thereof). As a result, when they too "escape" from their designated space in society (i.e. the ghetto), they are also perceived as out of place by society.

Gruen interprets Young's "marginalization" a bit differently: for her, "[…] *marginalization*, involves, in part, separating one group and viewing them as dependent on the dominant group." (Gruen, 2014:282). Interpreted in this way, marginalization produces dependency. The element of dependency, as discussed previously, is the reality of pets, lab-animals, and livestock. Consequentially, because they have been bred in such a way as to be docile and submissive creatures (in order to interact with humans), they would be completely helpless if released into the "wild". They depend on humans for their food, shelter, basic care, and in the case of pets and many lab-animals, social interactions. Young makes a very important remark: "Although dependency produces conditions of injustice in our society, dependency in itself need not be oppressive" (Young, 2006:9). Thus, it is not the mere fact that non-human animals depend on humans that makes their situation oppressive, but rather their exclusion from useful participation in life (as mentioned prior), as well as their subjection to severe material deprivation and even extermination (Young, 2006:9). This is definitely the case for lab-animals, livestock, and in certain circumstances pets too. Lab-animals and livestock are often subject to severe material deprivation as well as their inevitable extermination for the greater good of the human. The same is true for pets who are neglected by their owners or exterminated in shelters or by breeders in the culling process. Dependency understood in this way results in being deprived of choice (autonomy) and what Young terms "respect" (Young, 2006:10) which will be further clarified with the concept of powerlessness.

Furthermore, Young notes that "Marginalization does not cease to be oppressive when one has shelter and food. […] Even if marginals were provided a comfortable material life within institutions that respected their freedom and dignity, injustices of marginality would remain in the form of uselessness [and] boredom." (Young, 2006:10)[13]. Thus, I argue that non-

[13] For the sake of clarity, I have chosen to include the original quote: "[…] injustices of marginality would remain in the form of uselessness, boredom, and lack of self-respect." (Young, 2006:10). Since it is impossible to know whether non-human animals have a concept of self-respect, this element is irrelevant here.

human animals face the injustices of uselessness and boredom when they receive only the minimal care they require in terms of an enclosure (shelter) and access to food. Moreover, this minimal care is considered as respecting the dignity of non-human animals by humans. For instance, the North-American pet retailer chain Petco's information on *Betta Splendens* (betta fish) care states that the minimal required tank for betta fish is a quarter of a gallon (Petco, 2016). Although they can survive in these conditions, they are not recommended. Most aquarium hobbyists agree that betta fish thrive in five-gallon tanks as it prevents lethargy, loss of appetite, and abnormal swimming in these non-human animals. Evidently, the quality of the food and of the enclosure can lead to boredom in non-human animals. Lab-animals and most livestock (especially in factory farm conditions) also suffer these conditions when they are confined in cages lacking any form of enrichment. For livestock their enclosures are often barely larger than they are, with no stimulation and no room to move around (this can also be due to overcrowding). These conditions are described by many, for instance as Gruen notes about Hens "The battery cage is so small that the hens are unable to stretch their wings or turn around. Because of the stress, boredom, fear, and close quarters hens will peck at each other" (Gruen, 2011:83).

5.4 Powerlessness

Third, is the criteria of "powerlessness". Young's conceptualization of powerlessness is, in my opinion, excessively economically grounded to be applicable to all groups (especially those beyond the human species). Conceiving of "powerlessness" through the dichotomy of professionals and non-professionals, as she does, is overly restrictive, hard to conceive of, and hard to apply to social groups beyond the work place. It completely disregards the "powerlessness" of those who do not fit in the professional-non-professional dichotomy, such as the unemployed, unemployable, and the non-human (to name a few). Instead, focusing on the key ideas at the heart of what Young terms "powerlessness" seems more appropriate. In a nutshell, the powerless lack the opportunity, authority, and autonomy to make decisions about their own lives and are subject to disrespectful treatment (Young, 2006: 11). The criteria of powerlessness should extend beyond the workplace to society in general in order to be applicable to more groups. Thus, the lack of these qualities in society in general would indicate the powerlessness of certain groups. Moreover, Young's conceptualization of respect in terms of authority or influence seems overly simplified. In her words: "To treat people with respect is to be prepared to listen to what they have to say, or to do what they request because they have some authority, expertise or influence" (Young, 2006: 11). I disagree with the claim that respect

and authority necessarily go hand in hand, considering that one can have authority and be obeyed without being respected. Instead, her mentioning of "listening" is an interesting dimension to "powerlessness" (or respect). As Elizabeth Spelman develops beautifully in her *Inessential Woman*: "To tolerate your speaking is to refrain from exercising the power I have to keep you from speaking. In tolerating you I have done nothing to change the fact that I have more power and authority than you do" (Spelman, 1988: 182). She brings to light the embedded power dynamic in the act of listening: the one who listens has the power to allow or disallow someone from speaking, as well as the power to not pay the speaker any attention or acknowledgement whatsoever. *Actually* listening to and acknowledging someone, their viewpoint and one's power privilege in relation to them would be a more adequate sign of respect.

Respect in terms of being listened to, however, renders all non-human animals especially powerless considering that they do not have a shared verbal language with humans in order to contest the identities humans have construed for them: "Humans, by virtue of a shared verbal language, can aggressively challenge the profanation of their identity. By contrast, non-human animals […] are powerless" (Davis, 2011:44). Although, as Spelman argues through her concept of "tolerance", it has been proven time and time again that, despite being able to communicate through a shared language amongst humans, being a member of a minority group often results in one's plight being ignored. The criteria of respect for non-human animals can thus be interpreted in a few ways. It either does not apply to them because of a lack of shared verbal language between humans and non-human animals, making it impossible to communicate in that manner, or, in an Aristotelean fashion, it is *because* of non-human animals' lack of language that they are not respected (nor given moral consideration). As Gruen points out: "To be a non-human animal is to be a thing unworthy of respect" (Gruen, 2014:283). Thus, being compared to many non-human animals is an act of degradation or dehumanization (for instance "vermin", "cow, "pig", etc.). Furthermore, all non-human animals lack any autonomy or authority over their lives as they are completely dependent on humans for what, when, and how much they can eat, where they can be, if they can reproduce, if they have companions (of the same species), etc. Their opportunities in life depend entirely on the human that their care is in. Finally, in the work place pets, livestock, and lab-animals are powerless to the human in terms of their working conditions, the care they receive and the lives that they live.

5.5 Cultural imperialism

The fourth form of oppression is "cultural imperialism":

> *"To experience cultural imperialism means to experience how the dominant meanings of society render the particular perspectives of one's own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one's group and mark it out as the Other. Cultural imperialism involves the universalization of a dominant group's experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm."*
>
> – Young, 2006:12

According to the definition Young provides, I would argue that cultural imperialism is at the root of all the other forms of oppression. It justifies the exploitation of, marginalization of, powerlessness of and, as we shall see, violence towards, minority groups. Perhaps this is why she admits that "[n]early all, if not all, groups said by contemporary movements to be oppressed suffer cultural imperialism" (Young, 2006: 15). Cultural imperialism is, in my opinion, another way of explaining the process of othering I have detailed further up. Since the previous section focussed on how non-human animals are othered, I do not deem it necessary to repeat the ways in which pets, livestock, and lab-animals are all at the mercy of cultural imperialism.

5.6 Violence

Finally, oppressed groups can also experience "violence". According to Young: "Violence is systemic because it is directed at members of a group simply because they are members of that group" (Young, 2006: 13). This violence can manifest itself through physical violence, harassment, intimidation, ridicule, stigmatization, and many more. Furthermore, this violence is a social practice, it is legitimated, accepted and tolerated by society.

Indeed, the violence faced by livestock, lab animals, and, to a certain degree, pets is deemed acceptable and are therefore is not considered as violence; this is also known as institutional violence (Gruen, 2012:237). Davis describes the violence livestock face, especially those in factory farm conditions: "They are imprisoned in alien, dysfunctional, and disease-prone bodies genetically manipulated for food traits alone, bodies that in many cases have been surgically altered, creating a disfigured appearance –they are debeaked, de-toed, dehorned, ear-cropped, and (in the case of piglets), dentally mutilated– and always without painkillers" (Davis, 2011:42). The procedures she describes are rarely portrayed as such. Many avoid emotionally ridden words such as "mutilation" and instead favour "the removal of certain bodily structures" or instead of "debeaking", "beak conditioning". The shift in language towards less violent vocabulary drastically reduces the severity of the violence these non-human

animals face. This technique is similar to substituting "female genital mutilation" with "female circumcision".

In order to increase productivity in livestock, (violent) techniques such as the administration of antibiotics, hormones, genetic modification, as well as the manipulation of the light in barns or the removal of food are practiced (DeMello, 2012:135). Thanks to the administration of hormones and genetic modification, livestock grow more of the desired meat for humans in a shorter amount of time, by becoming plumper, and "meatier" than they were before. All of these practices that reduce production time and increase the production of meat, eggs, and dairy, can drastically decrease livestocks' quality of life; for instance, many of these non-human animals are no longer able to stand or walk due to their excessive body weight as a result of genetic modification and hormone administration. For hens, the removal of food (or their starvation) will lead them to molt, thereby increasing egg production (Gruen, 2011:84). Furthermore, as Davis pointed out, they are usually debeaked in order to prevent them from pecking at each other. This compromises their ability to forage for food, to preen, as well as establish a "pecking order" (a social hierarchy between a group of approximately thirty hens), although this is also compromised due to overcrowding or confinement in small cages (Gruen, 2011:84). Another technique in order to reduce production costs is reducing human care of these non-human animals (which as we mentioned prior, depend on that care). This leads to overcrowded conditions, cleaning the factories only once they are killed, and killing the livestock as soon as possible, the prime example being male chicks who have no purpose in the egg industry and are disposed of (by being crushed) soon after birth (DeMello, 2012:134).

As mentioned in the section on exploitation, sows live out their lives in gestation stalls where their movement is heavily restricted. Typically, a sow will undergo "six to seven pregnancies in three to four years before she is sent to slaughter" (Gruen, 2011:85). Furthermore, she is denied virtually any social interaction; in some cases she will be deprived of contact from her young, unable to nuzzle them, her piglets only given access to her teats. Like humans, pigs are highly social animals, with a high degree of cognition both in terms of intelligence and social cognition, similar to Cetacea, elephants, and great apes (Gruen, 2011:85). Their capacities are completely wasted in factory farm conditions where they can exhibit behaviours such as aggression, pacing, bar biting, and vacuum chewing (chewing when nothing is present) as a result from stress, lack of stimulation, and overcrowded conditions (Gruen, 2011:85). Finally, when the piglets are removed from their mother's care, their tails are

"docked" and teeth "clipped" in order to prevent tail biting in the overcrowded pens they will live their lives in until slaughter.

Hormones are administered to dairy cows in order to increase milk production, which, as mentioned prior, can create infection in their udders due to over-pumping or "milking off their back" (Gruen, 2011:85). Considering that they produce milk up to ten months post-pregnancy, they are kept in cycles of pregnancy and lactation through artificial insemination for three to seven years until they are considered "spent" and sent to slaughter (Gruen,2011:85,86). It is not clear how this practice is in Switzerland considering that according to Viande Suisse, lean beef is made from cows who are between the ages of one and two; therefore, they are unable to go through multiple pregnancy cycles, although, this does not include ground beef nor beef used in cat and dog food (Viande Suisse, n.d.). Furthermore, calves are often separated from their mothers at birth in order to prevent them from drinking their mother's milk that is destined for human consumption. This separation is extremely stressful for both mother and calf, the former of which can go on for days crying out to her sequestered child. The calves are often kept in veal crates where they are unable to turn or walk and are fed formula lacking iron in order to produce the lighter coloured meat (DeMello, 2012:134).

De-horning cows in Switzerland is also a very common practice (although it must be done using anaesthetic). According to the Radio Television Suisse Romande, an estimated nine out of ten cows are dehorned in the country (L'initiative pour les vaches à cornes déposée à la Chancellerie fédérale, 2016). It is a legal practice under the OPAn article 32, yet it contradicts the LPA's definition of dignity to which non-human animals have a negative right in article 3a. Consequentially, their dignity is violated when a constraint is imposed on them that cannot be justified by more important interests. These constraints include inflicting harm, pain, or damage to the non-human animal, putting them in a situation that would degrade or provoke anxiety in them, and submitting them to interventions that profoundly modify their bodies or capacities. However, their dignity can be circumvented by justifications concerning human interest (a more important interest). In the case of dehorning cows in Switzerland, this includes the fear of being charged at and injured by a horned cow or the fear of having cows harm each other with their horns since bruised meat due to injuries cannot be profitably sold (DeMello, 2012:134). Abstaining from dehorning cows not only inflicts less stress and sometimes pain onto these non-human animals, but may also be in the human's interest since, according to Reto Bucchli, horned cows make creamier milk (Vaches à cornes pour un fromage «plus crémeux», 2017).

Finally, when livestock are brought to their deaths they can suffer from injuries during their transportation to slaughterhouses, such as broken bones and being trampled or suffocated to death. When they are put to death, they are stunned before having their throats slit, although for many it can take a few tries before actually managing to stun them (especially with electric shocks) whilst others can still be conscious when their throats are slit. In Switzerland some cattle will be stunned by a bullet to their heads, as prescribed by article 179 of the OPAn, or even by carbon dioxide gas poisoning for pigs[14]. These examples demonstrate the extreme violence that livestock face daily in Western societies. Furthermore, this violence (in terms of the conditions in which they live as well as the mutilations to their bodies and their eventual violent death) are a direct result of the exploitation of their bodies for food.

Lab-animals also face violence in their daily lives and have done so for centuries. Indeed, vivisection was a common practice that only received mass opposition in the 19th century with the creation of the anti-vivisection movement. Many Greek scholars such as Aristotle and Galen were known for dissecting live non-human animals (see Hart, Wood & Hart, 2008, Guerrini, 2003, and Gruen, 2011: chapter 4), as well as the thirteenth-century doctor Ibn al-Nafis who practiced vivisection on non-human animals in order to understand and describe the functioning's of the circulatory system (DeMello, 2012:171). Notwithstanding, experimentation on non-human animals only became a standard part of medical research in the seventeenth century (DeMello, 2012:171), during which René Descartes notoriously participated in the vivisection of "live, conscious dogs and interpreted their screams, not as pain, but as instinctive noises that a machine might make." (DeMello, 2012:380). Descartes' violent barbarism against dogs was infamously criticized by Voltaire in his 1765 *Beasts*.

More contemporary accounts of the violence that lab-animals face today are multiple. The study of Parkinson's disease on vervet monkeys in St. Kitts laboratories is but one example. As Gruen explains: "[…] researchers damage the vervet monkeys' brains, causing dopamine production to cease, in order to model human Parkinson's disease." (Gruen, 2011:105). Neural stem cells from human fetuses are then injected into their brains, and after a period of months they are killed, and their brains dissected to validate whether the stem cells created dopamine-producing cells (Gruen, 2011:105). The research on vervet monkeys, who are socially complex and communicative non-human animals capable of communicating which predator is nearby

[14] Recently an Australian slaughterhouse has been accused of administering carbon dioxide gas well over the prescribed amount in order to speed up the slaughter process, but causing extreme distress and pain in the pigs in the process (Animals Australia, n.d.).

through different calls with their matriarch and who have mastered the art of deception/manipulation (which suggests a "relatively sophisticated cognition), drastically impairs their quality of life (Gruen, 2011:106,107). Irving Weisman at Stanford University is attempting to transform mice brains into a human one by injecting them with human cells, in order to create a more effective model for the testing of treatments for human brain disorders (Gruen, 2011:107). The American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation has also documented inflicting spinal injuries to rats and mice in order to study the improvement of their locomotor functions through a white stem cell transplantation (Gruen, 2011:123). Finally, an undercover investigation by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) exposed a research facility housing over 6000 primates, including chimpanzees, engaging in routine practices causing physical and psychological distress to the primates. One such practice is their confinement in isolation cages measuring 5" x 6" for months at a time, leading to neurotic behaviours, notably violent self-mutilation (Gruen, 2011:117). Evidently, lab-animals' quality of life is violently compromised through the administration of medication in order to study their withdrawal symptoms and side effects that can often be deadly, shaved in order to test cosmetic and medical products that can result in burns, hives, and rashes, or even subjected to solitary confinement in order to further understand the human psyche.

Finally, pets are also victims of violence by the pet industry as well as by certain individuals too. For instance, the "culling" (or killing) of kittens, puppies, bunnies and fry (baby fish) that do not conform to breed standards is an accepted part of the breeding process. These breed standards not only reduce pets to the status of "object" or "property" existing to satisfy human preferences, but also by privileging certain features over others in the breeding process that can result in disastrous health effects on non-human animals. The Pug's compressed face, for instance, causes them to have respiratory problems as well as eye infections and the German Shepherd disproportioned legs are notorious for developing hip dysplasia and arthritis. Another acceptable process is the surgical modification of pets to fit human preferences, such as tail docking, ear cropping, debarking dogs (by cutting their vocal chords), and declawing cats (or amputating part of their bone) (DeMello, 2012:93,94). Furthermore, breeding establishments such as "puppy mills" or "puppy farms" are notorious for their horrifying treatment of the non-human animals in their care, from their confinement in small wire cages, to their poor bill of health, and to living in their own excrement (Kenny, 2011:379). Many of them arrive in pet stores with serious health defects as a result. The same is true for popular pet rodents such as guinea pigs, rabbits, and hamsters. Moreover, unwanted pets that suffer from health defects, are

too old, too much work, or simply too unruly end up in municipal shelters and are inevitably euthanized due to a lack of resources (DeMello, 2012:238). In addition to the established pet industry, the exotic pet-trade is just as violent towards the creatures in their care, such as the wild capture of many non-human animals that can't be bred in captivity. This includes many species of saltwater fish –that are usually stunned by using sodium cyanide which is harmful to coral reefs (see Rubec, 1986), but also many species of birds, reptiles, amphibians, and certain mammals. Voigt's investigation on the Asian Arowana is not only an illustration of the negative impact fishing wild stocks for the pet trade has on the fish (which has led them to become critically endangered) but also of the violence in the breeding process leading to the "culling" of many fry due to any "imperfect" characteristic (Voigt, 2016: 40). Although Asian Arowana are difficult to breed, breeding them is highly sought after due to the fact that some "morphs" or colourations can sell for over one hundred thousand dollars. The excessive breeding (which leads to birth defects and their inevitable euthanasia) with the goal of discovering new and unique "morphs" that can sell for top dollar is especially true in the case of many species of snakes.

5.7 Closing Thoughts

According to Young's five faces of oppression, livestock, lab-animals, and pets are all oppressed, albeit in different ways. Clearly, livestock and lab-animals face a similar oppression in that they can be subject to all five, whereas pets can face exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and violence. Moreover, depending on the culture, the degree of these oppressions may vary. What can be said is that they can exist, have existed, and still exist in many parts of the Western world.

Much of non-human oppression is justified by the benefit their exploitation brings to humans. However, this argument is quite ironic, especially in the case of the oppression of livestock, considering the overall negative impact it has on human life. Not only does intensive "animal" agriculture have a negative impact on slaughterhouse workers, especially in terms of their dangerous working conditions, but it also negatively impacts the public health of the communities living around slaughterhouses. Although there are global health concerns regarding the development of anti-biotic resistant bacteria in factory farms that risk creating an epidemic in humans (Gruen, 2011: 90), local public health is often forgotten. A good example for this is the expansion of a Smithfield Foods pig factory farm in Wieckowice, Poland that was reported to have discarded of pig waste near a local school, causing students to become ill

(Gruen, 2011: 82). Furthermore, the waste contaminated a nearby lake causing the local residents to develop eye infections after swimming. Thus, intensive "animal" agriculture does more than directly affect human lives as it also negatively impacts the environment as well. Indeed, it is not only a major cause of oceanic dead-zones and deforestation but also of global warming. The United Nations estimates that livestock account for between fourteen to twenty-two percent of carbon dioxide emissions (Gruen, 2011: 88). Evidently, the justification of non-human oppression for the benefit of humans rests on shaky grounds, especially with regards to intensive "animal" agriculture.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Concluding remarks

This paper has focused on answering the question whether non-human animals can be considered as an oppressed minority in Western society. In order to do so, an in-depth, clear and concise conceptualization of what oppression constitutes was developed so as to avoid any criticisms concerning the relativity of oppression (i.e. that oppression is anything and everything under the sun and thus can apply to anyone). Then, Young's five faces of oppression was used as a practical criterion to determine whether non-human animals can be considered as oppressed. I believe I have successfully extended the concept of oppression to non-human animals both through the abstract conceptualisation of oppression (by targeting a group through the process of othering so as to create barriers that result in moulding, immobilizing, reducing, and effectively disadvantaging the group and privileging the dominant group), but also through the more practical criteria that Young's five faces of oppression provides.

Furthermore, the conceptualization of oppression I have laid out supports the intersectional (or even post-intersectional) nature of oppression, notably the ways in which oppressions rely on and play off of one another. In Gruen's words: "The oppressive attitudes and practices that non-human animals are subject to are not unlike the oppressive practices that thwart the flourishing of marginalized groups." (Gruen, 2011:202). This is especially clear in Adams' discussion on metaphoric borrowing mentioned in the introduction. Understanding metaphoric borrowing as a form of oppression (through the misrecognition of violence) is especially interesting when combined with Seyla Benhabib's (2006) interpretation of Young's five faces of oppression as a violation of the right to recognition. In addition, and as I have hinted at prior, further expanding the concept of oppression so as to integrate elements of

recognition developed by scholars such as Hegel, Charles Taylor (1994), Axel Honneth (1995) and Will Kymlicka (1995), would be an interesting development to intersectional literature on non-human animal oppression.

Finally, the approach on oppression that I have proposed, that is in structural, intersectional and holistic terms, has the advantage of being complemented by other approaches as well in order to determine what moral obligations we may have towards non-human animals as well as concrete and practical solutions to undermining non-human oppression. For instance, Peter Singer's utilitarian approach has a very practical scope in that it is based on the "basic principle of equality". This basic principle of equality compels equal consideration rather than identical treatment of all sentient creatures. Thus, what matters is that all beings with the ability to suffer must be considered equally. By marrying Singer's approach with the approach on oppression that I have laid out, some injustices that may be justified through utilitarianism may be unacceptable due to their tendency to maintain oppression as a structure. Moreover, depending on the context certain solutions may be more feasible or just than others. Singer's utilitarianism focused on weighing interests in conjunction with my approach that is more sensitive to the context of oppressive structures allows for a very complete analysis for a just course of action for both non-human animals and humans alike. As a result, both approaches are more complete and wearier of actions that might maintain oppressive structures.

6.2 Structural oppression and animal activism

One of the main goals of this paper is to give animal activists a better tool for raising awareness on the plight of non-human animals, as well as effectively combatting the oppression that they face. Thus, by focusing on oppression as an oppressive structure rather than focusing on deontological rights or the utilitarian criteria of suffering (although I believe these can be added to the discussion of structural oppression in the same way as I have explained for recognition), it becomes possible to see how different oppressions different groups face interact and rely on one another, and thus how oppression operates as a whole. Gruen eloquently sums up this goal:

> *"Framing the discussion of animal liberation as one that is understood in terms of oppression provides for an importantly different, and arguably deeper, of not only our current practices toward nonhuman animals but the ways such practices support unjust and harmful social and political structures, particularly structures of power. If we are to recognize and identify the oppression of nonhuman animals, then we may be able to more*

> *readily see oppression in other contexts. There may be a perceptual as well as practical advantage to adopting an oppression analysis. For example, gender or racial hierarchies, in which White men are thought to be separate from and superior to White women and women of color share a similar structure to hierarchies that separate humans from other animals and justify human dominance over the allegedly inferior others. Linking people of color and all women with non-human animals reinforces the inferiority that serves as a justification for various forms of oppression. In speciesist social contexts (which is virtually every social context in the contemporary world), the nonhuman animal other serves as a marker of the "rightfully" oppressed. By comparing those who are to be oppressed or continue to be oppressed, oppressors can naturalize and justify oppressive structures. When we begin to identify the cruel and life-denying attitudes and practices that nonhuman animals are subject to as oppressive practices, we not only explore ways to undermine their oppression, but oppression generally."*
>
> –Gruen, 2014:292,293

Just as Matsuda argues, I also argue that the best way to combat individual oppression is to target the oppressive structure as a whole, thereby requiring "coalition" or unity with other oppressed groups. Evidently, the argument is based on selfish grounds: if we can realize how non-human animal oppression interacts with our own oppression, then we have a reason to support the cause in order to undermine (or at least attempt to) the oppressive structure that maintains our own oppression. As Matsuda notes, "racism is best understood and fought with knowledge gained from the broader anti-subordination struggle" (Matsuda, 1991: 1191), and this is true for all other "isms" too. Thus, unifying all oppressed groups in order to combat oppression as a whole rather than their own axis may be more effective. Moreover, combatting the oppressive structure rather than focusing solely on individual oppressions reflects the post-intersectional metaphor of oppression as a house of cards; focusing on one oppression will only destroy part of the house of cards, not to mention that all the building blocks are still in place in order to re-build the house of cards. However, if many oppressions are targeted at once, re-building will be a lengthy process and may even have to start from scratch, thus making it more difficult: "in unity there is strength. No subordinated group is strong enough to fight the power alone, thus coalitions are formed out of necessity." (Matsuda, 1991: 1190).

The way in which the animal liberation movement has protested non-human animal oppression can thus be seen as ineffective and even supporting the oppressive structure it is attempting to dismantle. Indeed, by focusing on one axis of oppression (non-human animal oppression) rather than the oppressive structure as a whole makes the movement more prone to maintaining the oppressions of other groups. This is true for all liberationist movements. For instance, in 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft published her "Vindication of the Rights of Woman"

which was met with Thomas Taylor's satirical "A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes" in order to show the absurdity of her claims (Singer, 2002:1). However, since her reasoning when applied to non-human animals was viewed as completely absurd, when applied to women it was also just as absurd. Not only does this demonstrate the intersectional nature of the oppression of women and animals (as inferior beings to the white man) but it also devalues and maintains both groups in their subordinate position. The same is revealed by Crenshaw, who argues that feminism's failure to interrogate race as well as antiracism's failure to interrogate gender results in the reproduction and reinforcement of racism and/or sexism, not to mention the invisibility of women of colour (Crenshaw, 1991:1252). Moreover, the animal liberation movement is known for its sexist strategies that reduce women to sexual objects in order to sell animal the liberation message (Gruen, 2011:201). Peta's use of women's naked bodies in their campaigns is just an example, so too is their metaphoric appropriation of the Holocaust. Thus, as Gruen notes, "it is also important to be mindful of the connected structures of power that speciesism relies on and reinforces" (Gruen, 2011:202). I believe that conceiving of "animal liberation" in terms of structural oppression will enable the movement to be more effective in fighting oppression both for non-human animals and as a whole.

Moreover, most animal liberation movements advocate for a universal ethical veganism or vegetarianism which can be problematic. Not only does it demonstrate the privileges of the overwhelmingly Western movement –the mere ability to *choose* one's diet, rather than eat for survival, is a privilege– but it also fails to consider the cultural imperialist implications of wanting to universalize a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle for all, regardless of the context. In other words, it completely fails to consider the possibility of a vegan or vegetarian lifestyle as completely unpractical and unfeasible in certain contexts. As a response to this, many ecofeminists have argued in favour of an intersectional approach to animal-liberation; one that bases its moral code on context as well as weariness of cultural imperialism. Thus, they argue that it can be ethically justifiable in particular contexts to kill and consume animals for food and clothing. An illustration of this intersectional approach is the case of the aboriginal Inuit people of the Canadian Arctic and whale hunting. Banning the Inuit's from whale hunting fails to consider the oppression this minority group faces by the Canadian government, as developed by Kymlicka (1995). As a result, if the Canadian government were to force this community to abandon whale hunting, this action could be understood as maintaining the oppression of this minority group. Thus, in aiming to demolish the oppression faced by whales, one is systematically supporting the oppression of a minority group; thereby ineffectively tackling

oppression as a whole. To be clear, this intersectional approach doesn't argue in favor of moral or even cultural relativism –Susan Okin's *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women* (1999) discusses why arguments on minority cultures shouldn't condone oppressions occurring within that cultural minority– but rather in favour of considering oppression as a whole.

6.3 Possible intersectional analyses for academic research

Finally, understanding oppression in both structural and intersectional terms enables for interesting academic intersectional analyses. One I find particularly worthy of further research is the oppression slaughterhouse workers (and the communities they live in) and livestock face simultaneously. Historically, in the United States of America, slaughterhouse workers were people of colour living in low-income communities, the majority of which were African Americans (Jenkins, 2018). Today, thirty-eight percent of slaughterhouse workers (from production to sanitation) are foreign-born noncitizens, many of which are undocumented, do not speak English, are thus easy targets for intimidation and manipulation, receive poor wages, and do not protest their poor work conditions (in the most dangerous job in the country in terms of illnesses and injuries) from fear of either losing their jobs or being deported (DeMello, 2012:139). Typically, violence by individuals to non-human animals is considered as "deviant violence" or unacceptable and criminalized in society (DeMello, 2012:242). This includes the killing of companion animals as well as livestock via methods that violate the law. There is now a wide consensus that individual violence against animals is strongly correlated with violence against other humans, a well-documented phenomenon known as "the link". As DeMello discusses, many serial killers started out their "careers" by torturing non-human animals as children. This is also the case for as many as half of all school shooters too (DeMello, 2012:245,246). This supports Adams' claim that batterers, rapists, serial killers, and child sexual abusers have all victimized animals (Adams, 1994 and Adams, 1995). The typical "animal" abuser is a child, and overwhelmingly a boy (DeMello, 2012:245,246). Furthermore "[c]hildren who are cruel to animals exhibit more severe psychological, emotional, and behavioral problems than other children" (DeMello, 2012:246). This supports the American Psychological Association's view that cruelty to non-human animals is symptomatic of conduct disorder, notably patterns of antisocial behaviour that can persist into adulthood (Randour, M. L., n.d.). Furthermore, the patterns of non-human animal abuse in childhood reflects their upbringing, as DeMello demonstrates through studies that claim that 88 percent of families with a history of child abuse also exhibited some form of animal abuse; children who witness animal abuse are more likely to harm a companion animal, children who abused animals are twice as

likely to have been abused themselves, and children who witnessed domestic violence in the home are three times more likely to harm non-human animals (DeMello, 2012:246). Finally, the link between domestic violence and violence towards non-human animals is startling, as DeMello notes "[…] between 50 percent and 85 percent of women who escaped their homes due to domestic violence reported that their partner has abused the family animals as well" (DeMello, 2012:248); this includes sexual abuse to both women, children, and non-human animals (DeMello, 2012:248,249). Based on the number of women who reported an assault by their partners and also reported that their abuser targeted companion-animals, the HSUS estimates that nearly one million animals are abused or killed in connection to domestic violence (DeMello, 2012:248). All of these claims are supported by many such as Felthous & Kellert, 1986, Collard & Contrucci, 1989, Lockwood & Ascione, 1998, Flynn, 1999, Sauder, 2000, Flynn, 2001, Merz-Perez, Heide, & Silverman, 2001, Merz-Perez & Heide, 2004, Haden et al. 2018, Bright et al. 2018, and Hensley, Browne & Trentham 2018.

This consensus begs the question, are slaughterhouse workers more likely to be violent towards other people? One distinguishing factor that separates crimes against non-human animals from slaughterhouse workers is that the latter's violence is condoned by society (except for the cases exposed by animal rights groups of extreme unnecessary violence carried out by certain slaughterhouse workers). Does this have an impact on the psychological trauma that they are subjected to because of their violent job? Considering that "[w]orker turnover can exceed 100 percent in a year" (DeMello, 2012:140), one could assume this to be the case (although the high turnover rate can also be due to injuries or illnesses). Unfortunately, I do not yet have an answer to this musing considering that the empirical research on this intersectional question is lacking. The few studies on the topic (see Dillard, 2008, Fitzgerald, Kalof & Dietz, 2009, Emhan, Yildiz, Bez, & Kingir, Said, 2012), however, suggest the same correlation as mentioned prior, that violence against non-human animals is positively correlated with violence against other humans.

Another interesting opportunity for intersectional analysis that I have alluded to is how scientific research (especially those on non-human animals) maintains and assumes gender inequalities or gender norms. Linda Birke's *Feminism, Animals, and Science: The Naming of the Shrew* (1994) is a good starting point. The use of biopower in the control of non-human animals as well as its implications for humans with reference to Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1978), Twine's *Animals as Biotechnology* (2010) as well as an analysis on the thought experiment Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* offers. Finally, the intersectional

implications of the oppression the homeless and their pets face –both of which can be considered as dependent "Others"– also merits further examination. The fact that most homeless shelters do not allow non-human animals on their premises leads to a sort of double marginalization of the homeless who find comfort in their companion animals and will not abandon them for shelter. In arguing that oppression is both structural and intersectional, I hope that I have laid out the groundwork in order for more in-depth intersectional analyses to take place for both humans and non-human animals alike. If we are at all concerned with achieving equality through the abolition of oppression, then non-human oppression cannot be overlooked any longer.

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