

EATING THE OTHER

The Animal Question in Contemporary Art



Master Thesis
Charlotte Wessels, 3242692

Submitted January 7th, 2014
Supervisor and first reader: dr. Kathrin Thiele
Second reader: dr. Domitilla Olivieri
Comparative Women's Studies in Culture and Politics

EATING THE OTHER

The Animal Question in Academia, Activism and Art

Charlotte Wessels

Student Number 3242692

January 7th, 2014

Acknowledgements	5
Introduction	7
Central Questions	11
Theoretical Framework	13
<i>Of Men, Mice, and Machines</i>	13
<i>Factual Equality versus Equal Consideration</i>	17
<i>Reweaving the Nature Culture Divide</i>	20
<i>Posthuman(ist) Relating</i>	24
Methodology	27
A New Language Of Adress Through The Arts	27
Towards a New Materialism	29
Case Studies	31
COMPANION - Processes of Seperation	32
ON AMY TAXIDERMY, FROM A TRUE FAN - Who is Killable, Who is Not?	42
BABEL FAT TOWER - Of Progress and Decline	51
Conclusion	58
Bibliography	60

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before delving into the content of this thesis I would like to express my gratitude to those who have motivated, encouraged and inspired me during the process. First of all my thanks go out to the entire staff of the Gender Studies department in Utrecht; this year of ‘doing gender’ for the Comparative Women’s Studies Master and all the courses, individual lectures and conversations have given me a wonderful experience that has enriched, shaped and sharpened my thoughts. Special thanks go out to my supervisor dr. Kathrin Thiele who has been patient, supportive and motivating in a past few months where personal pressures have sometimes supplanted the focus on my writing. Her guidance has been of great value. I would also like to thank dr. Domitilla Olivieri for the ‘Technobodies in Cyberspace’ discussions that have provided important motivations towards this writing’s subject matter, and for being the second reader of this thesis.

Secondly I would like to express my gratitude to Ine Gevers and Laura Mudde for providing me with an internship at Art Manifestation ‘Yes Naturally, How Art Saves The World’ and helping me to make the most out of this experience. This internship provided me with new and interesting encounters with a multitude of artworks, artists and spectators, and offered me a practical as well as academic engagement with contemporary art in a field which was entirely new to me, but has resulted in the work before you.

Finally but most importantly, I would like to thank my family and partner, who have shared a great deal of excitement, frustration and discussion with me over the content of this thesis, sometimes with my writing as the direct instigator of discussions, and sometimes with the vegetarian and vegan dishes that started to replace my previous carnivorous cooking at family occasions around the time that I started considering the topic of this thesis. I owe them greatly for their unconditional support.

Introduction

How to speak about the animal, when, as Derrida reminds us, the violence done to animals begins with “this pseudo-concept of ‘the animal’, with the use of this word in the singular, as though all animals from the earthworm to the chimpanzee constituted a homogeneous set to which man would be radically opposed”? (Derrida, 2008: xi)

How to speak about the animal, when speech, claimed through language by the human animal, is used time and again to reduce non-human animals to mute matter, so easily spoken for and essentialized? For such endeavor, alternate modes of relating are required, modes that offer a novel systems of knowledge production. This thesis explores how contemporary art engages with the ‘question of the animal’ as posed by influential writers and philosophers in the realm of ecofeminism and critical post-humanism. It will engage with current discourse of species, more specific, the problem of eating animals, and focus on how art poses ‘the animal question’.

For the purpose of introducing my writing, I would like to reflect on my choice to have this thesis carry the title *Eating the Other*. Referring to the animal as the ‘Other’ emphasizes the embeddedness of this engagement with the animal problem within feminist and postcolonial studies. After all, the term ‘Other’ has a long and specific history within feminist academia, gaining already significance with Simone de Beauvoir’s feminist milestone *The Second Sex* (1949), which describes how humanity is considered male, and woman is considered merely in relation to man; “He is the Subject, he is the Absolute - she is the Other” (Beauvoir, 1949: 6). Likewise the term ‘Other’ has been used in feminist writing to indicate the suppressed half of cultural dualisms, or the object in any subject/object division, whether it be about sex, race, sexuality, or, in this writing - species. Within the following chapters, I will make clear the parallels between several of these oppressions, and how they might reinforce each other. For now, I will turn to another feminist voice, the poststructuralist race studies scholar bell hooks and her article, equally called *Eating the Other* (1992). The choice to have this thesis carry her article’s title underlines the parallel between the several-isms in this thesis (racism, (hetero)sexism, speciesism) and embeds this thesis in the works of feminist scholarship by which it was informed and inspired. After all, when bell hooks expresses her fear about the ‘Other’ being

eaten, consumed, and forgotten, the 'Other' she is referring to is a non-white, human Other. In the article, which will be discussed later in more detail, the author expresses her fear of race and ethnicity becoming commodified as resources for pleasure, turning the cultures and bodies of specific groups into "alternative playgrounds where members of dominating races and genders affirm their power over the 'other'" (hooks 1992: 378) However, whereas hooks made a striking *metaphor* when she described how ethnic differences are 'continually commodified and offered up as new dishes to enhance the white palate', (hooks,1992: 380) for non-human animals, it is no metaphor but reality to be "eaten, consumed, and forgotten." (hooks, 1992: 380) The tragedy of this reality -is why, using the feminist toolbox, this thesis will deal with the eating of animals.

To approach this issue requires a level of personal reflection in relation to the research, as to not fall in the trap of Cartesian claims of so called value-free objective knowledge, or what Donna Haraway calls playing 'the God trick' (seeing everything from nowhere) (Haraway, 1988: 578). Haraway's concept of 'situated knowledge' refutes the idea of objectivity in research altogether, and emphasizes awareness of partiality and locality of knowledge. "Feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges" (Haraway, 1991, 188) In line with Haraway's situated knowledges, my ethical viewpoint in this thesis is both to acknowledge my personal and political concerns, and to realize that in talking about the animal 'other', I mediate a discourse in which the other can not 'speak'. Indeed, Gayatri Spivak's brainchild question 'can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988) is lurking around every corner in this thesis. Spivak asks her famous question after taking note that all accounts of sati (a social funeral practice of widow sacrifice among Indian communities in which "the Hindu widow ascends the pyre of the dead husband and immolates herself upon it." (Spivak, 1988: 93)) are from accounts of British colonizers, but that there is a lack of an account from the women themselves; even if the women are spoken about/for by well intentioned researchers, the researcher still sets the parameters for their representation. It leads Spivak to conclude that the subaltern cannot speak. (Spivak, 1988: 104). The question whether the subaltern can speak, applied to non-human animal seems rhetorical as they could not - even if they set all the parameters - *speak* for themselves. How then does one even start to address issues of the situation of non-human animals? A least of evils is offered by Derrida's concept of ethical deconstruction, which applied to the relating to non-human others can be defined as an ethics toward an unknowable and/or uncalculable other. (Weil, 2012 42) which entails a recognition and extension of care to others while acknowledging

that we may not know what the best form of care is for an other from which we can not presume to know. (quoted in Weil, 2012: 42)

I will incorporate into this research the considerations above in order to avoid presenting this thesis as if it would not be affected and polluted by my own concerns. I am aware of the minefield one walks into when discussing this topic. Speaking about the suffering of non-human animals all too explicitly, all too often is regarded un-scientific, as statements on animal suffering could imply judgement about the moral wrongs and rights of eating animals. While the goal of this thesis is to explore how contemporary Art engages with the question of the animal, and *not* to claim whether the killing and eating of animals is wrong or right - something that even the giants of the fields do not agree on - I find it impossible and undesirable to hide my personal concerns with the killing and eating of animals behind the veil of political correctness. That is why I will state my main concerns, which are threefold, below, in order to explicitly situate myself.

I want to begin by suggesting that posing the question of eating animals tends to produce responses of either resistance or indifference. Resistance, as the choice of not eating meat by some humans can be regarded as an optional stance of moral superiority over other humans, or indifference, as the consideration of empathy towards non-human earthlings tends to be mistaken the domain of soft-hearted animal lovers exclusively. As I aim to make clear in this writing, an engagement with the question of eating animals is neither optional, nor does it need to have anything to do with whether you like animals or not.

The animal question is in fact linked within global structures of power, hierarchy, economics and politics. First of all, because - as I will explain in this thesis - the framework of speciesism, which allows the systematic killing and eating of animals for food, is in its core similar to racism and sexism as it allows the discrimination of an other based on a generic characteristic (Singer, 1975). Many writers whose voices informed this writing have shaped the reasoning that if we vehemently oppose racism and sexism because they discriminate on the basis of a generic characteristics, we should also consequently oppose speciesism for the same reason.

Second, food and ethics are indeed closely interlinked as eating is an activity in which every human on earth is involved as we are all consumers of food. This means that even a small change in our food choices influences not only the lives of the over fifty billion nonhuman land animals and additional billions of sea animals which are killed for consumption per year (Singer&Mason, 2006), but also the lives of humans involved in food production, the environ-

ment, global food politics, economics and health, the latter not only because of dietary choices but also through the chemicals and hormones agriculture puts into the rivers and seas and the spread of diseases like avian influenza (Singer&Mason, 2006)

Third and final, I want to underline that the systematic impunity towards animal suffering in its own right - regardless of the possible negative effects of speciesism on humans and the global implications of eating meat - should be reason enough to closely engage with the subject. Therefore I will try to stay away from trying to present the animal question as a puzzle of which the solution would merely serve human interest. As if it were too soft or irrelevant to consider the suffering of the 'other', for the sake of the other. It is not especially 'soft' or 'nice' to question something especially cruel. It is, dare I say it, the human thing to do.

And it has been done by animal rights activists, academics and artists alike for several decades. Already in 1975, Peter Singer wrote the classic book of the animal rights movement *Animal Liberation*. Since then, animal rights activists from all disciplines have made tremendous efforts to improve the treatment of animals worldwide, with effect¹. Today, there is a growing acknowledgement of animal sentience (Weil, 2012). Research increasingly shows traits in animals previously thought to be exclusively human and the graduate global acceptance of evolution theory abolishes strict boundaries between different species. Donna Haraway puts it well when she states in her *Cyborg Manifesto* that "the last beachheads of uniqueness have been polluted, if not turned into amusement parks - language, tool use, social behavior, mental events. Nothing really convincingly settles the separation of human and animal." (Haraway, 1991: 151 - 52) However, regardless the implications of these findings, we continue to kill animals for food, and it could make one cynical that these drastic shifts in knowledge (however partial and situated) about animals do not produce an equally drastic shift in our attitudes towards them. However, I find motivation and a motto in 'staying with the trouble' (Haraway 2013) a concept which Donna Haraway recently offered again in an interview with Rick Dolphijn for the publication of *Art Manifestation Yes Naturally*, where all three works presented in this thesis' case studies were exhibited. In this interview Haraway states that "cynicism is not an acceptable position in the face of the crises that we are in." (Haraway as quoted in *Yes Naturally*, 2013: 110). Staying with the trouble - the alternative she offers - which involves 'aes-

¹ Singer lists a great many of the signs of progress made from drop of sales in the fur industry, to the lower number of animals killed in shelters and pounds, the ban of battery cages in several states, the ban on the confining of pregnant sows in individual cages, and the new law that will ban battery cages for hens, and veal and sow crates in California from 2015 on.

thetic, cognitive, literary, technical, sensual - all with depths of thinking, sensing, feeling, bearing, acting, is. (Haraway, 2013: 110) As my academic background (and my faith, and my fascination) lies with the arts, this thesis will depart from the aesthetic, making contemporary Art its central discipline. The above arguments explain my personal motivation to analyze the potential of contemporary art to engage with the animal problem.

CENTRAL QUESTIONS

Two questions guide this thesis. (1) how does 'eating the other' become problematic within the framework of posthumanism, and (2) how does art engage with the animal problem?

This thesis explores how art engages with the 'question of the animal' as posed in the realm of ecofeminism and critical posthumanism. It will critically engage with current discourse of species, more specific, the problem of eating animals, and through three case studies from the arts focus on how contemporary art poses 'the animal question'. However, in order to do so, first it must be established if there is in fact an animal problem, what this problem is, and how it is embedded in the framework of feminist scholarship.

The theoretical framework of this thesis will consider speciesism, the theoretical framework that allows for the systematic killing of animals, the nature/culture dichotomy, as it is at the heart of the devaluation of all non-human nature, and continue by discussing the scholarly fields of ecofeminism and posthumanism, both showing deep engagements with non-human nature. In the methodological chapter I will make an argument for the potential of contemporary art to establish social/political change and produce knowledge, I will introduce the method of New Materialism and explain that it fits with a posthuman worldview as it breaks with the idea of 'muteness' and 'dumbness' of non-human matter.

In the second chapter I will introduce three case studies from the arts; *Companion*, by Simon Evans, *On Amy Taxidermy* by Tinkebell and *Babel Fat Tower* by Raul Ortega Ayala, and explore how they engage with the animal question. These case studies will be a guide to think of, and with several themes in animal studies. Within this chapter, I will use the tools provided by the discussed ecofeminists, posthuman thinkers and the method of New Materialism in order to rethink the implications and potential of these works of art, to address the question of eating animals. The third and final chapter will synthesize this thesis' main points, return to its' central questions and draw a conclusion from all the above.

Theoretical Framework

The following sections will go over the key concepts of this thesis and define my angle towards them, in order to make clear my theoretical framework, and position myself within the subject. These chapters will emphasize how the framework that allows for the discrimination of non-human animals, is similar to the framework at the root of discrimination within the human species, and how any engagement with ‘the question of the animal’ - defined broadly as the question if and how far the moral responsibilities of humans should extend beyond the limits of their species towards non-human animals - in turn extends to the question of morality all together.

This theoretical framework will start out by sketching a *history of human attitudes towards non-human animals*, from ancient Greece, to Christian - to enlightened thought. After that, it will consider *the concept of speciesism* as popularized by Peter Singer as the theoretical framework that allows for the systematic killing of animals (Singer, 1975). The next section will focus on the *nature/culture dichotomy*, and on how *ecofeminists* state that this dualism is at the heart of the devaluation of non-human life all together, followed by a discussion of the scholarly field of *posthumanism*.

OF MEN, MICE, AND MACHINES

Historic Perspectives on Human/Nonhuman Relations/Rights

It is impossible to speak about the eating of animals without speaking about the killing of animals. In the following section, I will introduce the concept of speciesism, coined by Richard D. Ryder and popularized by Peter Singer, and explain how it allows for the systematic killing of non-human animals for food. Humans have eaten non-human animals for all of recorded history and currently kill and consume over fifty billion non-human land animals and additional billions of sea animals for consumption per year (Singer/Mason, 2007: 281). The following section will sketch several historical influential attitudes towards non-human animals; from Greek philosophy, to Christian thought, and Enlightenment. With the giant leaps through history that it will take, it does not aim to represent a historic overview but rather to explain that the attitude which Singer calls ‘speciesism’ has historically prevented thinkers through several ‘revolutions’ of thought to take serious the question of the animal. After all, the roots of speci-

esism are old and lie in Christian pre-christian and religious thought alike. Already in the fourth century BCE the idea of animals existing for human use was argued for in the ancient tradition of Greek philosophy schools. Most influential was the school of Plato's pupil Aristotle². Although Aristotle was ahead of his time by acknowledging that man *is* an animal, he did not let this implicate that humans should avoid inflicting pain on non-human animals, as he explicitly supported a hierarchic society where those with more reasoning ability are valued over those with less, both between human and non-human animals, as within the human species. Consequently, he supported slavery quite openly by this argument, claiming that even though the slave is just as much human as 'free' humans, with the same abilities to feel wide ranges of emotions and sensations, he was thought to be inferior in his reasoning powers, and thus Aristotle regards him a 'living instrument' (Singer, 1975: 189): "The slave is the one who, though remaining a human being, is also an article of property" (Aristotle, in Dent & Sons, 1959: 10) The ideas of Aristotle were to become influential in the tradition of Western thought. One can imagine that if the difference in reasoning powers were enough to enslave certain people, the 'enslavement' of animals is not problematic, but simply a given. Aristotle's hierarchic idea of a nature where those with less reasoning ability exist for the sake of those with more is made explicit when he states that "plants exist for the sake of animals, and brute beasts for the sake of man (...) Since nature makes nothing purposeless or in vain, it is undeniably true that she has made all animals for the sake of man" (Aristotle, Dent & Sons, 1959: 16)

Whether one regards the fact that the Bible follows Aristotle's influential claims so closely an impressive coincidence or a logical flow of events depends exactly on one's religious beliefs. Regardless, the rise of Christianity did not change much about the preposition that all animals crawl the earth for the sake of men. In fact the biblical story of creation in Genesis explicitly defines the nature of the relation between human and non-human animals as a relation in which man dominates all living beings on earth:

"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 earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." (Genesis 1:26)

² Though Aristotle was most influential, the Greek schools of philosophy were not uniform about the subject of how to treat non-human animals. Pythagoras for example was a vegetarian and encouraged his followers to treat animals with respect (Singer, 1975, 188). The vegetarian diet has long been referred to as the Pythagorean diet.

The book of Genesis thus historically functioned as a religious justification for man's God granted dominion over non-human animals³. The book was popularly quoted to reinforce the justification of killing animals for food: "It matters not how man behaves to animals, because God has subjected all things to man's power" (Aquinas, 1265, II, I, Q102 art. 6) Saint Thomas Aquinas, the Christian philosopher responsible for the enormous work *Summa Theologica* (1265), which aimed to reconcile theological knowledge with the work of earlier philosophers, writes about animals in a manner similar still to Aristotle, his main argument being that "there is no sin in using a thing for the purpose for which it is". He describes the relation between human and non-human animals, and the purpose of those animals as follows: "Now the order of things is such that the imperfect are for the perfect... Things, like plants which merely have life, are all alike for animals, and all animals are for man" (Aquinas, 1265, II, II, Q159, art. 2)

The Renaissance and the concurrent rise of humanist thought reclaimed the ancient Greek motto that "Man is the measure of all things", and although humanist thought through acknowledging the value of all human beings brought about valuable advances in human rights issues, this went at the expense of the 'lower animals' whose limited abilities were often used to argue for the uniqueness of mankind. In fact, 'the human' was achieved by denying its animal origins, and repressing both its biological and evolutionary origins in nature. (Weil, 2012: 24) Humanism rested on what Cary Wolfe in his book 'What is Posthumanism', calls 'fantasies of disembodiment and autonomy' (Wolfe, 2010: xv) which has everything to do with, and only won ground when, in the first half of the seventeenth century during the so-called Western scientific revolution, a combination of Christian doctrine and modern philosophy was found in the work of Rene Descartes. Inspired by the new science of mechanics, Descartes argues how everything and everyone including human beings consists of mechanistic parts, much like a clock. (Singer, 75: 200) A possible implication of such assumption could be that humans are similar to non-human animals, however Descartes was able to escape these implications by

³ As to not give a one-sided account of the arguments to be found in the Bible, it is fair to note that Christian animal rights activists have argued how the Book provides interesting hints arguing *for* animal rights. For example, in paradise before the fall of man, Eve and Adam only ate 'the green herb'- Proverbs 12:10 claims that "The righteous take care for the needs of their animals" and Matthew 10:29-31 reads that "even a sparrow does not die unnoticed". Many other examples can be found, however, these examples are not often used, so even while they are interesting and they have potential for claiming animal rights on religious grounds, they do not fit (yet) in a succession of 'influential' thought on the relation between human and non-human animals between the likes of Aristotle and Aquinas.

suggesting that all beings are mere machines, but that human beings uniquely own a God-created immortal soul, making us conscious beings that surpass mere matter. Non-human animals do not according to Descartes have a soul, which makes them unable to feel pain or pleasure; they are like machines; they merely passively respond to impulse. Immanuel Kant in 1780 still told his students in accordance to this view that “So far as animals are concerned, we have no direct duties. Animals are not self-conscious, and they are merely as a means to an end. That end is man” (Kant quoted in Peter Singer, 1975: 203) However, from Voltaire comes around that time a critique on Descartes mechanistic worldview when he describes:

“There are barbarians who seize this dog (...) and dissect him alive, to show you the mesaraic veins! You discover in him *all the same organs of feeling as in yourself*. Answer me, mechanist, has Nature arranged all the springs of feeling in this animal *to the end that he might not feel?* (Voltaire, 1764, sv “Betes”)

In 1859, Charles Darwin’s work *The Origin of Species* and the following *The Descent of Man* (1871) provided scientific evidence that the relationship between humans and animals should be reconsidered as it suggests the theory that Homo Sapiens had descended from other animals, finally contradicting justifications of our dominion over non-human animals based on humans supreme creation. However, the dominion over non-human animals was and is so much ingrained in Western culture, that thinkers today still struggle with the concept of speciesism and the ‘question of the animal’. Richard D. Ryder, who coined the term ‘speciesism’, still asks over a century after the publishing of Darwin’s *Origin of Species* why, if there is no ‘magical’ essential difference between humans and other animals, we *do* make ‘an almost total distinction morally? (1971: 81): “If all organisms are on one physical continuum, then we should also be on the same moral continuum” (Ryder, 1971: 81) The following section will focus on how contemporary writers such as Ryder and Peter Singer engage with the animal question.

FACTUAL EQUALITY VERSUS EQUAL CONSIDERATION

Singer's 'Classic' Argument for Human and Non-Human Rights

The term 'speciesism', coined by Richard D. Ryder, gained popularity when it was utilized almost four decades ago by Peter Singer in his book *Animal Liberation*. Singer defines speciesism as a "prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one's own species and against those members of other species" (Singer, 1975: 6). Singer presents speciesism as by analogy to sexism and racism, biases which can be defined similar to speciesism by replacing the word species for gender ('a prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one's own gender and against those members of other genders', or race (repeat the exercise). Singer claims that the ethical principle on which human equality rests requires us to extend equal consideration to animals too. (Singer, 1975: 1) To fully comprehend this claim it is useful to unfold the several parts of the writers reasoning. First of all, if the 'ethical principle on which human equality rests requires us to extend equal consideration to animals too' (Singer, 1975, 1), what does the writer mean by 'the ethical principle on which human equality rests'? Singers argument, in the cases of human equality, is that the concept of morality should not be based on the important differences between humans, and that we should not tie the moral principle of equality to the factual equality of the different races or sexes, taken as a whole. For not basing the principle of equality on factual equality, he offers two main arguments: First of all, because - and he is stating the obvious here - "we must face the fact that humans come in different shapes and sizes (...) with different moral capacities, different intellectual abilities, (...) and different capacities to experience pleasure and pain." (Singer, 1975: 3) He concludes that if the demand for equality were based on the actual equality of human beings, "we would have to stop demanding equality." (Singer: 1975: 3)

Second, Singer continues by stating that even if there would be certain measurable differences both among races and between sexes, these would only appear when averages are taken, so they do not qualify individual beings, and more importantly he emphasizes that we do not know how many of those differences would be due to environmental factors such as quality for schools and housing and other factors that can be the result of past and continuing discrimination. (Singer, 1975) We can see how the writer is sensitive about difference all together, but in his following claim he takes the argument a step further by suggesting that even if there were a significant difference in abilities, and thus *factual inequality*, this still should not guide our

moral principles. He sketches the example of a society where the interests of those with IQ scores below 100 be given less consideration than the interests of those with ratings over 100, “perhaps making those scoring below the mark their slaves” (Singer, 1975: 3) He asks the reader whether “a hierarchical society of this sort (would) really be so much better than one based on race or sex” (Singer, 1975: 4) He suggests that it would not. “But if we tie the moral principle of equality to the factual equality of the different races or sexes taken as a whole, our opposition to racism and sexism does not provide us with any basis for objecting to this kind of inequality.” (Singer, 1975: 4)

So Singers reasoning for not tying the moral concept of equality to factual equality as described above is developed in three stages: first of all, we can not deny the existence of difference, but - second - it is hard to define difference by its origins (for example with race or sex) and third, even if we could, like in his IQ based example, this would still not justify inequality. The conclusion that Singer draws is that “there is no logically compelling reason for assuming that a factual difference in ability between two people justifies any difference in the amount of consideration we give to their needs and interests.” (Singer, 1975: 5) Rather, he concludes that: “The principle of the equality of human beings is not a description of an alleged actual equality among humans; it is a prescription of how we should treat human beings.” and he refers to Jeremy Bentham who described the basis of morality by the definition that “each (is) to count for one and none for more than one” (Bentham as quoted in Peter Singer, 1975: 5):

“The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withhold from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognized that the number of the legs, the velocity of the skin, or the termination of the os sacrum are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, of perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day or a week or even a month, old. But suppose they were otherwise, what

would it avail? The question is not can they reason, nor can they talk, but can they suffer?" (Bentham as quoted in Peter Singer, 1975: 7)

The final argument presented by Bentham above is often referred to as the argument for marginal cases (Dombrowski, 1984). It states that if justification to kill an animal and not a human, is the fact that the animal has a 'lack of self', then it would justify killing certain humans as well. After all, some marginal-case humans lack a sense of self as well; infants, the cognitive disabled, the comatose. (Dombrowski, 1984: 141) We can see in the argument for marginal cases how the question of the animal reaches beyond the limits of species, as defining humanity by cognitive ability, is defining humanity by a definition that excludes certain humans as well. So Singer follows Bentham's arguments and rests his argument for animal rights on the philosophical basis that since animals have the capacity to *suffer*, and thus a demonstrable interest in avoiding suffering, it is their rights to have those interests protected. Singer concludes his argument against speciesism by arguing that "the attitude towards animals of previous generations are no longer convincing because they draw on presuppositions - religious, moral, metaphysical- which are now obsolete" (Singer, 1975: 186) and that speciesism, by allowing the (minor) interests of their own species, to override the (major) interest members of other species, is similar to racism and sexism in its pattern, and just as unjustifiable.

What this section aimed to do, is to historically frame human attitudes towards non-human animals, to show how speciesist notions are ingrained in the history of Western philosophy, but also to show how these notions are, like Singer wrote, based on religious and metaphysical ideas that, for many of us, no longer shape our image of the world.

In the following section I will introduce the concept of the nature/culture divide. This dualism of human invention, as I will argue, is at the very heart of many systems of oppression amongst which speciesism.

REWEAVING THE NATURE CULTURE DIVIDE

Ecofeminism and the parallel between the -isms

This section will discuss how not only non-human animals, but in fact all non-human nature has historically been subjected to human nature through what contemporary thinkers call the nature/culture duality. The nature/culture duality is a hierarchical dichotomy wherein culture is represented as a social/active subject, and nature as a bio-physical/passive object. I touch upon this subject in this thesis since, as Cary Wolfe states in his book *Animal Rites* (2003) “the theoretical and ethical issues that attend the question of the animal are only part of the larger issue of nonhuman modes of being and are therefore inseparable” (Wolfe, 2003: 193). The nature/culture duality is inseparable from speciesism - I will argue through several thinkers from the realm of ecofeminism and posthumanism - as it qualifies all non-human nature as mute matter to be acted upon. Whereas the preceding section illustrated that all historic discussions about animal rights cross over to the realm of human rights, the aim of the following section is to emphasize explicitly the parallel between the several -isms among which (hetero)sexism, racism, and speciesism. In her article ‘Third Wave Feminism and the Need to Reweave the Nature/Culture Duality, Colleen Mack-Cantny points out the roots of the nature/culture dualism as dating back to the ancient Greeks “who developed philosophy and politics largely in a dualistic framework”. (Mack-Cantny, 2004: 155) In this dualistic framework, nature and culture are dichotomized, as are for example the private and the public sphere, body and mind, and men and women. These dualisms metaphorically combine: within the dualism of nature versus culture, man was often identified with ‘cultural’ disembodied characteristics such as ‘order, freedom, light and reason, which are seen as better than, and in opposition to women’s allegedly more “natural” and/or embodied characteristics such as disorder, physical necessity, darkness, and passion’ (Brown in Mack-Cantny, 2004: 155) This concept proposes that women are the nurturers and mothers while men are the workers and brains. In this scenario men are viewed as the actors (subject) and women as the acted upon (objects) (MacCormack 1980: 12). Women’s reproductive capacities add to the association with nature, and the merger of nature and women can be seen in metaphorical significations like the identity of nature as a nurturing mother; Mother Earth, or Gaia (Merchant, 1980: xx). This scenario, as many feminists have argued, devalues both nature and women. That is why I would like to begin this section about ecofeminism by setting straight a common misconception; ecofeminism is not so much about

women identifying with nature, as it is about feminists recognizing the common oppression of women and nature alike, and their efforts “to overturn modern constructions of nature and women as culturally passive and subordinate.’ (Merchant, 1980: 2) The difference is significant and misunderstandings unfortunate, after all, if ‘women overtly identify with nature and both are devalued in modern Western culture, don’t such efforts work against women’s prospects for their own liberation?’ (Merchant, 1980: xvi) A definition of Ecofeminism is offered by Val Plumwood in her 1992 article “Beyond the Dualistic Assumption of Women, Men, Nature”. She states that ecofeminists “see the nature/culture dualism and the dominant male model of humanity as leading not only to oppression of women, but also to the destruction of nature and to racism and social inequality.” (Plumwood, 1992: 8)

Feminists as far back as Simone de Beauvoir recognized that the nature/culture dichotomy played a major role in constructing gender ‘in a way so as to distort or exclude women (Ortner 1974, in Mack-Canthy, 2004: 155), however, it was in the second wave of feminism in the middle 80’s when ecofeminism originated as mostly women in the peace movement began to perceive the interrelationships of militarism, sexism, racism, classicism and environmental damage (Sturgeon, 1997: 27). They chose to call themselves ‘ecofeminists’ as the name explained the interdependencies of their political concerns. They perceived the interrelations of above categories (race, sex, class, etc.) and began to challenge many of the major dualistic arrangements, among which the nature culture dualism. (Mack-Canthy, 2004) However it is third wave feminism in particular, that refutes dualistic thinking: ‘thinking that divides the world into hierarchical dichotomies with one aspect regarded as superior and the “other” regarded inferior.’ (Mack-Canthy, 2004: 164) Of all waves, ecofeminism consequently is perceived as one most prominently within third wave feminism, where it is one of the three major ‘feminisms’ as pointed out by Colleen Mack-Canthy in her article ‘Third Wave Feminism and the Need to Reweave the Nature/Culture Duality. All three major third wave feminisms (the others being youth feminism and postcolonial feminism) seem to have the common goal of ‘challenging the idea of dualism itself while recognizing diversity, particularity and embodiment’ (Mack-Canthy, 2004: xx), the distinction that ecofeminism makes in relation to the others is the fact that it insists that non-human nature is a feminist concern. (Warren, 1997): Ecofeminism in its use of ecology as a model for human behavior, suggests that we act out of a recognition of our interdependency with others, all others: human and nonhuman. This is where ecofeminism becomes relevant for the animal question as their ‘ethics of care’ (Gilligan 1982) state, that every-

one's position must be taken in consideration in relation to all others, and in the case of eco-feminism this moral responsibility extends not only to all genders and races but also to the non-human world. In this respect it takes a drastic turn away from humanism and potentially, speciesism, in so far that the responsibility to extend moral care to non-human others is compatible with Peter Singers notion of 'equal consideration' (Singer, 1975)

The introduction of this writing presented oppression of race and species as parallel systems by introducing the article of bell hooks, *Eating the Other*. As to pose an example of how these parallels can be drawn, the following paragraphs present a return to bell hooks and aims to engage deeper with the statements made by the writer in the article, and the parallels that can be drawn between the oppression of race that bell hooks addresses, and the oppression of both non-human animals and more generally, nature.

When bell hooks expresses her fear about the 'other' being eaten, consumed, and forgotten, the 'other' she is referring to is a non-white, human other. Introducing her article, hooks writes about an encounter with a group of white jock type boys. She walks behind them while they are expressing their desire for women of several ethnicities other than their own: "[T]hese young men talked about their plans to fuck as many girls from other racial/ethnic groups as they could "catch" before graduation." (hooks, 1992: 368) The boys see no harm in openly expressing their sexual desire for colored girls. After all, does their desire for contact not represent a progressive change in attitude? Would a white supremacist past not have labeled such desire as shameful and taboo? Regardless the fact that both these questions could be answered with a short and resounding 'yes', Hooks argues that this desire is filled with stereotypical assumptions of 'otherness': "As is often the case in this society, they were confident that non-white people had more life experience, were more worldly, sensual, and sexual because they were different." (hooks, 1992: 368-69) Engaging in sexual encounters with non-white females then, becomes what hooks calls a 'ritual of transcendence', a rite of passage that will reconstruct their masculine norm and help 'asserting themselves as transgressive desiring subjects.' The author continues to express her fear of race and ethnicity becoming commodified as resources for pleasure, turning the cultures and bodies of specific groups into "alternative playgrounds where members of dominating races and genders affirm their power over the 'other'". (hooks, 1992: 369) Hooks describes this desire for the other as a 'wave of "imperialist nostalgia", defined by Renato Rosaldo in *Culture and Truth* as "nostalgia, often found under imperialism, where people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed"

(Rosaldo in hooks 1992, 369) or as “a process of yearning for what one has destroyed that is a form of mystification” (Rosaldo in hooks 1992: 369) Could it be that the Western World at this point is going through ‘Naturalist Nostalgia’? Naturalism being used often as a term alike speciesism referring to humans’ disregard of not just animals but all non-human nature (Merchant, 1987). This nostalgia, as is the case with imperialist nostalgia, is a process of yearning for what one has destroyed. The extents of which can be read from ozone depletion, carbon dioxide buildup, resource depletion, the disappearance of tropical rain forests and northern old-growth forests and entire species of plants and animals becoming extinct every day. (Merchant, 1987) Non-human nature after all has long been commodified as a resource for human endeavors (Wolfe 2010) comparable to how hooks describes race and ethnicity being commodified as resources for a dominant race. Non-human nature is acted upon by human nature, like passive matter, similar to how the dominant race or gender acts upon the ‘other’. ‘Naturalist Nostalgia’ then, can be seen in the recent changes towards a less indifferent attitude towards nature and animals, the desire to enjoy, preserve and ‘take care’ of non-human nature. Labels such as ‘green’, ‘sustainable’ and ‘ecofriendly’ are becoming synonyms to ‘economically viable’ (Christov-Bakargiev, 2013). Judging by the increase of eco-friendly products and services and the growing popularity of organic foods it almost seems as if we are indeed going through a transition for a more friendly attitude toward non-human nature. This is however, where the parallel with Bell Hooks article ends. Whereas the boys in her story - albeit wrongly as hooks explains - identified themselves as post-racist, post-speciesism as a concept is even harder to imagine, as the concept of speciesism itself has hardly reached outside academia and certain brands of animal rights activism yet. Through the recognition of human rights and the positive results of postcolonial, civil rights and emancipatory movements in the twentieth century, language has developed to address racism, and the idea of equality within human species is much more accepted today. Such language of address is yet to be found for speciesism, and contrary to the idea of equality *within* human species, the idea of equality *between* species is a new and maybe even a foreign subject to many. (In Cary Wolfe’s *Animal Rites*, speciesism is introduced as ‘the unexamined -ism’, 2003: ix) In fact, one could wonder whether any of the recent positive changes towards non-human nature were made for the sake of non-human nature, or rather to relief some of the fear for the future of human resources and habitat. And finally, if there is in fact a desire to enjoy, preserve and ‘take care’ of non-human nature, is this a step away from speciesism or does it rather affirm humans power and domination over nature? The

over fifty billion nonhuman land animals and additional billions of sea animals which are killed for consumption per year (Singer/Mason, 2006: 94) tend to indicate the latter. In 'Eating the Other', bell hooks explains how a phenomenon that seems a positive shift in attitude towards race (white boys desiring colored girls; imperialist nostalgia), shows every sign of, and is still based on racial stereotypes and forms of domination. Strikingly similar is how a phenomenon that seems a positive shift in attitude towards non-human nature (the increase of 'green' products and services; naturalist nostalgia), shows every sign of, and is still based on humans domination over non-human nature. bell hooks with her article offers a toolbox to argue how a presumable positive shift in attitude can, and maybe should still be regarded a symptom of racism. By studying the reasoning behind her argument, it becomes possible to use the toolbox she offers to make a similar analogy about species. Intra-actions like these are typical for the work of ecofeminists, and at the heart of their methods as they recognize that 'sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, speciesism and naturalism (the oppression of nature) are mutually reinforcing systems of oppression, the work to end any oppression is valuable.' (Mack-Canty, 2010)

POSTHUMAN(IST) RELATING

Companion Species and Naturecultures

The work of ecofeminists to end these forms of oppression exists in overlap with the work of different scholars in the field of the philosophical worldview of posthumanism, which has worked its way into contemporary critical discourse in the humanities and social sciences during the mid 90's as a direct critique of and reaction to humanism. (Wolfe, 2010: xii) As Cary Wolfe states in his book *What is posthumanism*, it is not easy giving a closing definition of what posthumanism entails exactly because contrary to humanism there is rather little unanimity about the meaning of the term. (Wolfe 2010: xi) Perhaps, it is easiest to define posthumanism by the very thing it defies: Posthumanism in contrast to humanism, acknowledges the evolutionary, biological and technological embeddedness of humans in the world (Wolfe, 2010: xv) and suggests an understanding of humanity not outside the world of matter but rather an understanding and acceptance of the fact that humanity is inter-dependent on all sorts of non-human agents: 'It is posthumanist, in the sense that it opposes the fantasies of disembodiment and autonomy inherited from humanism' (Wolfe 2010: xv) 'Fantasies of disembodiment'

sounds rather abstract but can be seen in the fact that for centuries, 'the human' was exactly achieved by denying its animal origins, and repressing both its biological and evolutionary origins in nature. (Wolfe, 2010: xv). The before mentioned nature/culture divide -where men associated themselves with nature - as well as the Cartesian body/mind split - the body representing 'mere machines' and the mind the 'divine soul' of men - are all means to the end of this repressing humans origins in nature. The gradual global acceptance of evolution theory played a large role in the reversal of this process as the idea that we descend from a universal ancestor and share an undeniable set of biochemical and morphological traits with non-human life (Weil, 2012), makes the idea of humans autonomy and uniqueness rather unlikely.

This point is made most poignant by Donna Haraway in her *Companion Species Manifesto* (2003), which refuses both speciesism, and the nature/culture dualism, by presenting dog/human relationships as a model for relating to 'otherness'. Its underlying message is that "there cannot be just one companion species; there have to be at least two to make one" (Haraway, 2003: 9) which is to say that there is never really an 'I' as the 'I' only really exists in relation to the 'other'. By this reasoning Haraway undermines anthropocentric thinking, after all the 'other' can not be merely the human other as the writer has often reminded us, we consist of, and are interdependent on all sorts of many non-human agents bacteria, viruses, "bodies and words, stories and worlds" (Haraway, 2003: 20) which are joined in what Haraway calls 'nature-cultures' (2003: 20). With the concept of 'naturecultures' Haraway reweaves the nature/culture dichotomy, simultaneously defying speciesism as 'companion species' are interdependent and co-emergent. The interdependence of 'it takes at least two to make one' rules out hierarchical, speciesist thinking.

The previous pages have emphasized how the concept of animal rights and human rights have been historically interweaved. Considering Haraway's relational concept of living together interdependent with/of non-human actors, the interdependence of animal and human rights is underlined. It is no coincidence that many posthuman scholars reverse the relation of human and animal rights: whereas it historically was, and is still common to argue 'from human to animal (If we fight racism and sexism, then we should also fight speciesism), we now see the emergence of a reversed reasoning which states that the speciesist discourse has to change (first), in order for racism, sexism and other -isms to ever disappear. An example we see with Cary Wolfe, as he reasons how the very concept of speciesism allows for the hierarchic "othering" of humans as well. He argues: "as long as it is all right to systematically exploit and kill

nonhuman animals simply because of their species, then the humanist discourse of species will always be available for use by some humans against other humans as well,” (Wolfe, 2010: 8) Manuela Rossini argues for the same case when she explains how the discourse of speciesism allows for US soldiers to reduce the prisoners of Abu Ghraib to an animal state, which legitimizes gruesome acts of torture, as there are no laws to prevent the inflicting of pain to animals:

“The implicit and explicit analogies between racism, sexism, homophobia that accompany the above description of the torture methods, confirm that the power of the “discourse of species” to affect *human* others depends on the prior acceptance of the institution “speciesism;” i.e. on taking for granted that the inflicting of pain and the killing of nonhuman animals by human animals does not constitute a criminal act but, on the contrary, is legal.” (Rossini, 2006)

The first of this thesis’ two central questions is, ‘how does the eating of non-human animals become problematic within the framework of posthumanism/ecofeminism?’ At this point is useful to conclude this first question summarizing the paragraphs above. An answer to the question of how the eating of non-human animals becomes problematic could be, that first of all we are generally trying to live ethical lives governed by certain moral codes, and second, we agree with Singer that “the attitude towards animals of previous generations are no longer convincing because they draw on presuppositions - religious, moral , metaphysical- which are now obsolete” (Singer, 1975: 186), If we support a less anthropocentric world view in which humans are not the great apex of being, nor the only active, able of feeling, sensing, thinking, suffering, subjects in the world, if also we consider the discrimination on the basis of generic qualities to be unjustified and we have condemned such behavior when it comes to humans in the shape of (hetero)sexism, racism, classism and the likes, *then* this should lead us to the conclusion that there are in fact no compelling reasons to limit our moral responsibilities to our own species, based on the generic quality of species alone, and we *should* in fact at the very least question the systematic killing of animals, as it has become problematic.

Methodology

A NEW LANGUAGE OF ADDRESS THROUGH THE ARTS

The second half of this thesis presents three case studies from the arts and explores how they engage with the animal question as posed in the preceding pages. I will turn to the field of contemporary art specifically, which, through Rosemarie Buikema's article *Monumental Dresses Coming to Terms with Racial Repression*, (2012) I have come to understand as an alternative system of producing knowledge. Buikema argues that we should take seriously the potential of art to add complexity and depth to politics, and that complicated matters - such as post-colonial transitions in her article - need to be informed by disciplines that "employ a concept of the powers of imagination, most notably, the arts" (Buikema, 2012: 58). She explains:

"Oppression and internalized oppression are complex processes to work through. Often the biggest obstacle to lasting change is the lack of a new structure, a new language of address, which can be utilized once the yoke of oppression has been cast off."
(Buikema, 2012: 55)

As the question of eating animals is at a very complicated intersection of ethics, economics and politics, it is difficult to approach through what Buikema calls the "dialectic of human science" (Buikema 2012: 56). The preceding pages have aimed to show how the paradigm dominating the discourse of species hardly shifts as it is dominated by the repetition of the same arguments regardless of new scientific/philosophic arguments. As such, the animal question is exactly a topic in need of a new "language of address" (Buikema 2012: 55), and I would argue that as the work of artists is exactly to transgress the restrictions of fixed boundaries, it produces knowledge through a discourse that, rather than merely representing 'reality', or the paradigm that shapes reality, invites the spectator to engage actively with a work of art, creating knowledge through *embodied experience*. In this respect, art does not solely engage with the questions at stake, but it also demands work from the spectator, who is in direct dialogue with the artwork. As a disclaimer to the case studies to come, I must state the obvious and emphasize that I am the spectator doing the 'work' in these cases, and since within every person an artwork might link to different knowledges, experiences and sensibilities present in the specta-

tor, my dialogue with the artworks can and will in not per definition represent the dialogue of another given spectator. However, in this multiplicity of options, I rather see potential. When I speak of the audience, viewer or spectator, in the following case studies, I speak not of a passive being taking in information, but rather of an active agent in dialogue with the artwork through visual and sensory engagement. I take these cues from among others Theatre Practitioner Augusto Boal when he argues that “Art is the search for truths by means of our sensory equipment (Boal, 2006: 5) One of the main functions of art, he claims, is to make people sensitive to the ‘spectacles’ of daily life in which the actors are their own spectators.” (Boal, 2009: xx) The exploitation, imprisoning, killing and eating of ‘nonhuman animals’ lie at the heart of the discursive practices that we have adopted in our daily life, and for questions of how to challenge these practices, we return to Rosemarie Buikema. What Buikema is calling for, is a strategy that enables a ‘consideration of the complexity, or multilayeredness, of oppression and victimhood.’ (Buikema, 2012: 55). She sees in art the potential of dealing with these matters in entirely novel ways. The animal question then, might be exactly the type of issue that needs a discipline capable of considering these complexities; complexities which in this case only becomes larger when the ‘other’ or victim being considered is not human. How do we challenge these practices? (the exploiting, imprisoning, killing and eating of non-human animals) Or, as Cary Wolfe asks in *What is Posthumanism?*: ‘how must our work itself change when the other to which it tries to do justice is no longer human?’ (Wolfe, 2010: 7) Wolfe, as well as Buikema, emphasizes the potential of art (conventional media like poetry, visual art, film and music as well as architecture) to ‘present real world objects or phenomena as representations of an imaginary world’ (Wolfe, 2010: 11) as they can challenge established models of nature/culture distinctions, and where human beings aren’t the absolute and unquestioned autonomous center of the universe.

TOWARDS A NEW MATERIALISM

Our understanding of art, as well as the world around us, is culturally and socially informed, and thus subjective to dominant world views. The humanist discourse has traditionally colonized art theory in a way that qualifies interpretive frames of meanings - the discursive and linguistic - over the material. (Barrett, Bolt, 2013: xi) By doing so, it emphasizes the human creation of things and qualifies form/meaning over matter.

This thesis, which is an engagement with contemporary art so much theoretically framed in posthumanism, asks for an approach that goes beyond traditional interpretive frames of meaning through linguistics and iconography. Rather, in line with its theoretical framework, it asks for a posthumanist approach to the problem. This is why my engagement with the case studies below will be framed by the theoretical aims of new materialism, returning agency not only to the artist behind the work but more so to the very material - often, in fact, dead animals, that made the works possible. How does this new materialism 'work'? Barbara Bolt explains, that "at the core of the material turn, a concern with agential matter (Bolt, 2013: 3). The philosopher Martin Heidegger coined the qualification of form meaning over matter the 'form-matter synthesis': 'The form-matter synthesis reinforces the "muteness" and "dumbness" and "irrationality" of matter (...) on which humans act' (Bolt, 2013: 5). For Heidegger however, matter is not just 'the substrate of the artist's actions' (Bolt, 2013: 6): He explains this argument by introducing the example of the emergence of a silver chalice:

"the artist doesn't create the silver chalice nor is the chalice formed matter. Instead he proposes that the silversmith is co-responsible for and indebted to other co-collaborators for the emergence of the "thing" as a silver chalice' (Heidegger 1977a: 6).

This illustrates what has been called the 'material turn'; a posthumanist theoretical approach to art theory. This new materialism suggests a shift from 'meaning' (interpretation) to 'matter' (materiality) and requires 'a rethinking of the relationship between materiality and signification.' (Barrett, Bolt, 2013: xi) As a theoretical framework applied to the arts, new materialism does not negate the discursive dimension of art, but does account for the material reality of existence. Art becomes a co-collaboration in which matter as well as the human has responsibility for the emergence of art (Bolt, 2013: 6). The artworks in the following sections are of a

strong discursive nature and therefore I will not manage to escape linguistic discursive interpretation, therefore, I will try to stay with the task described in *Carnal Knowledge, Towards a New Materialism through the Arts* (2013) by postmodern feminist academic Susan Hekman as she sees new materialism able to ‘account for the material reality of our social existence without losing sight of the discursive dimension of that reality’ (Hekman, 2010: 90) which makes the question regarding all these works: ‘how do we bring the material back into the equation without losing the insights of the linguistic turn that characterized the last decades of the twentieth century?’ (Hekman 2010: 107)

The following section of this thesis will introduce three case studies from the arts. Simon Evan’s *Companion*, Tinkebell’s *On Amy Taxidermy, from a true fan*, and Raul Ortega Ayala’s *Babel Fat Tower*. These studies will present what can be regarded a classical interpretive approach, a link back to the theoretical arguments that were presented in this thesis’ previous chapter, and it will also aim to do justice to the material dimension of the artworks. Each one of these artworks will deal with the eating of animals from a specific angle. Together, these artworks show a progression in thought about the eating of animals; when thinking about the social and cultural act of eating meat, it is inevitable to at one point consider the killing of animals, which in turn raises questions about the codes and rules of humans general relationship to animals. Every one of these artworks highlights one of these considerations specifically. *Companion* as it questions how we relate to the animal, *On Amy Taxidermy*, as it questions how we respond to the act of killing the animal, and *Babel Fat Tower*, as it provides a metaphor for our very eating practices.

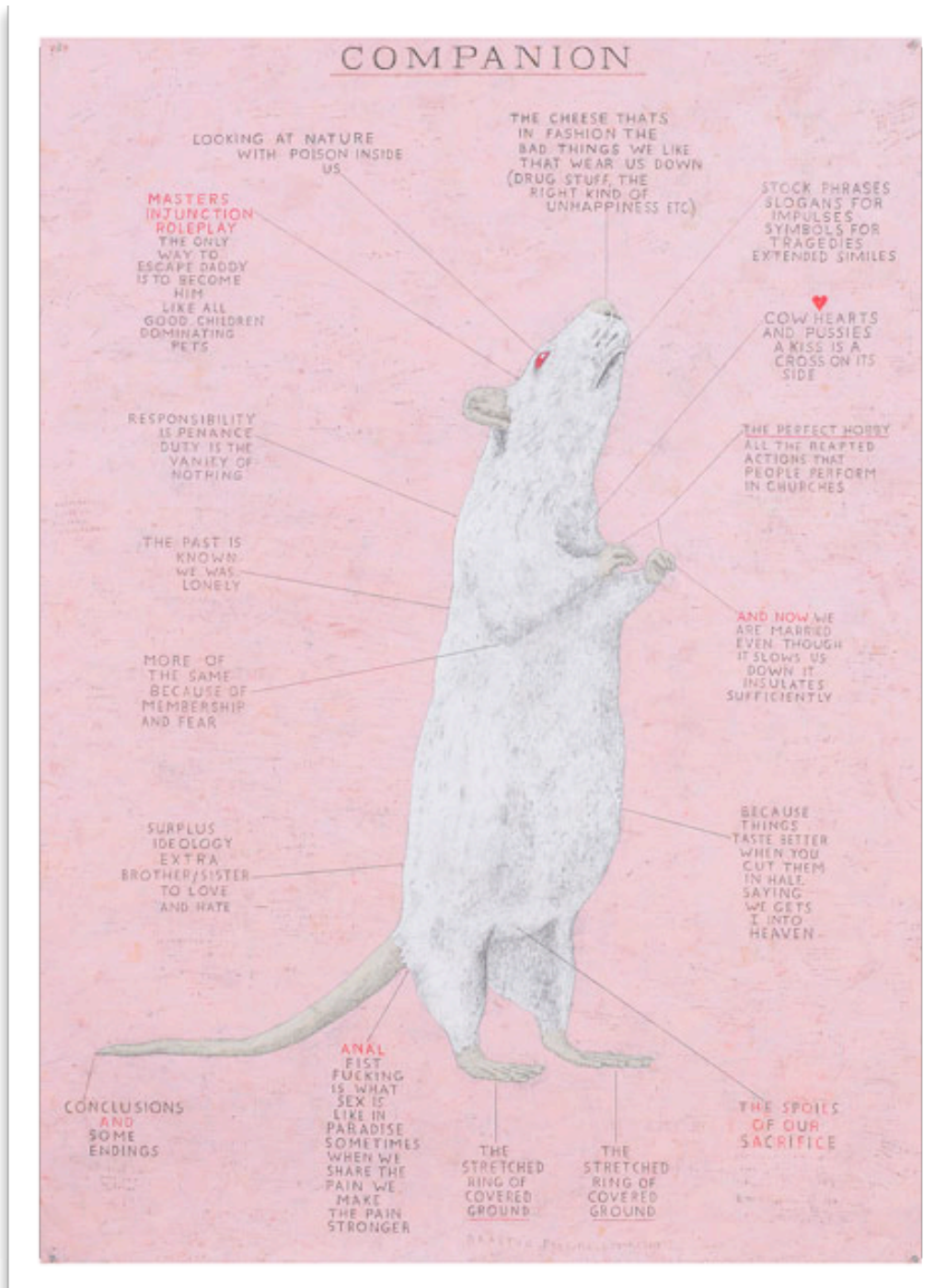
Case Studies

COMPANION - PROCESSES OF SEPERATION

Simon Evans, 2010. Pencil, scotch tape, paper. 150,5 x 107,32 cm

Art Manifestation Ja Natuurlijk, GEM Den Haag.

Collection Mudam Luxembourg - Musee d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean



Simon Evan's 'Companion' is an image of a white rat with red eyes, drawn on a collage of numerous white and pink paper scraps and scotch tape. Meticulously assembled, these scraps form the background to the pencil drawn critter. The rat is drawn larger than life, raised to its hind legs, giving the rat both a human posture, and bringing it to eye level with humans looking at the work. Standing eye to eye with the rat, attention is drawn to the cluster of arrows surrounding it, which are each attached to a sentence or combination of words. The words do not refer to the part of the animal's body they are pointed at. Rather, they consist of human statements, actions and reflections. Beside the clear words attached to the arrows, there are scribblings, words and sentences in various states of readability, some of which seem to be written before the paper forming the background of the rat was torn to pieces and glued together again with scotch tape, others are written over the seams of the paper scraps, demanding more attention. The rat is headed by the title of the work: 'Companion'.

In the following analysis I want to inquire into the questions: how does this work affect the on-viewer on a sensory, discursive and material level? What kind of relating to this animal does the work imply? Finally, keeping with the central question of this writing; how does this work make one (re)think the ethics of eating animals? This work has many dimensions one could focus on; the rat itself, the materiality of the work, the riddles of language surrounding the critter, and they will all come to pass, but this engagement of the work will start by studying its much emphasized title; *Companion*.

Raised to an average humans height, and surrounded by human language, this artwork blurs several lines between rat and human, in what can be considered an attempt to make it easier for the spectator to relate to the critter. Paul Kokke, in the publication for Art Exhibition *Ja Natuurlijk* (2013) where the work was on display, describes the work as follows:

“And Maybe you will find a new friend at *Yes Naturally*, the rat. Artist Simon Evans elevates the animal abhorred by so many people to another level with a drawing that links the various physical parts of the rat to short, pithy texts. The words, however, seem to apply more to the viewer of the drawing than to the rat itself. As a result the animal evolves into a creature equal to man. Indeed it is no accident that the work is called

Companion (2010), in the dictionary definition of ‘a friend or acquaintance you associate yourself with’. Even though this will still be horrifying to many visitors of *Yes Naturally*. (Kokke, 2013: 128)

This calls for an intra-species conversation. One that will start by reflecting on this work’s title and pairing it with the writing of feminist theorist and philosopher of science and technology Donna Haraway, an author who has joined inter-species conversations in many of her works. Her *Companion Species Manifesto (Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness)*, which shares part of its title with the artwork at stake, offers a way of deconstructing boundaries between human and animal, self and other. (Haraway, 2003) The manifesto, which was mentioned in the previous chapter of this thesis, does so by presenting dog/human relationships as a model for relating linguistically and emotionally to (significant) otherness. By taking dog/human relationships seriously, she explores human-animal relationships and other naturecultures to better understand our approaches to (significant) otherness. “I believe that ethical relating, within or between species, is knit from the silk-strong thread of ongoing alertness to otherness-in-relation. We are not one, and being depends on getting on together.” (Haraway, 2003: 50) As an exercise to see whether Haraway and Evans, or rather, the *Companion Species Manifesto* and *Companion* can converse beyond their title, I will compare and reflect on their main tropes.

One thing that makes the title *Companion* stand out in combination with the main character of this artwork is the fact that rats, although recently promoted to the category of domestic animals, are historically known as pests rather than pets⁴; carriers and transmitters of disease, and later subjects for scientific research. These different realities are acknowledged by the artwork through the texts surrounding the rat. One sentence reads ‘drastic perfume laboratory’ in small lettering below the rat’s feet, another reads ‘like all good children dominating pets’ in large capitals pointing towards the rats brain. Facing these multiple identities, we would not know which is the rat that invites us for a conversation, if not for the title. However the implications of the rats identity are great: in the instance of the rat as pest, the very presence of the rat is considered a problem which can be resolved by either expelling or killing it. In the in-

⁴ Whereas archeology has placed the first domestication of dogs at approximately 30.000 BC and with certainty at 7300 BC, the domestication of rats started only in the 18th or 19th century when rat catchers, who usually either killed or sold their trapped rats for bloodsport, started keeping and breeding certain odd-colored rats, and selling them as pets to the upper class of Victorian England, where they were kept adorned with ribbons.

stance of the rat as test animal the rat is considered a product for research - of higher value than the rat as pest - but still considered a disposable resource which can be used for human endeavors. It is only in the third instance that rats life is valued and the animal is endowed with a semi-human status as a domestic pet. The fact that the value attached to the rats life differs so greatly depending on the role it plays in human life seems conflicting, but in her *Companion Species Manifesto* (2003), Donna Haraway argues that the rights of animals - as well as other species - do in fact depend entirely on the relationship of one animal to another being. In the following section I will try to unfold her argument and make clear the importance of it for the artwork, our general relating to animals and specifically to the animals that we eat. Donna Haraway states that no animal (including the human one) is an autonomous being with certain fixed rights, but that those rights emerge in interaction with the 'other'. (Haraway, 2003: 51) : "Just who is at home must permanently be in question. The recognition that one cannot know the other or the self, but must ask in respect for all of time who and what are emerging in relationship, is the key." (Haraway, 2003: 50) As Haraway takes her arguments in this manifesto primarily from examples in dog/human relations, she puts her poetic prose about rights emerging through interaction into practice by introducing the views and methods of the famous companion animal trainer Vicki Hearne, whose animal rights ideologies depart from exactly the conviction that animal rights are not at all given, but emerge from interaction with humans:

"Hearne believes that the origin of rights is in committed relationship, not in separate and pre-existing category identity. Therefore, in training, dogs obtain "rights" in specific humans. In relationships, dogs and humans construct "rights" in each other, such as the right to demand respect, attention, and response. Hearne described the sport of dog obedience as a place to increase the dog's power to claim rights against the human." (Haraway, 2003: 52)

Haraway underlines Hearne's theory and its foundation in reciprocatory rights: "If I have a dog, my dog has a human" (Haraway, 2003: 54) She emphasizes that animal rights are not given but emerge from interaction. When it comes to the animals that 'we' eat however, 'we' have in most cases not known the animal when it was alive, we have not established a relation to it, nor has there been interaction. Modern factory farming and the processing that turns

living animals into neat, boneless, pink, plastic packaged products create a separation between the animal and the consumer. If we reason by the theory that interaction and relation are needed in order for 'rights' to emerge, then 'we' and the animals we consume, are by this process of separation, losing our chance to claim rights in each other. An animal rights connecting the dots between Singer and Haraway might conclude that the lack of 'interaction' between humans and the animals they eat is at the heart of the very ease with which 'we' deny animals their rights to 'equal consideration' (Singer, 1975).

However, the animal is not only made absent from the act of eating meat by processing. Language, playing such a large role in Simon Evan's *Companion*, contributes largely to the process of separation. I will turn to the American writer, feminist and animal rights activist Carol J. Adams who in her feminist-vegetarian work of critical theory *The Sexual Politics of Meat* describes the conceptual process in which the animal disappears from meat eating, the structure of the 'absent referent'. (Adams, 1990): "Animals are made absent through language that re-names dead bodies before consumers participate in eating them. The absent referent permits us to forget about the animal as an independent entity." (Adams, 1991: 136) The structure of the absent referent works by actively removing the animal from food by language. If animals are alive they can not be called meat. Adams explains that if an animal dies to become meat the significance of meat is not added to the animal, but the animal is rather replaced and made absent by a dead body, becoming the absent referent 'absent from the act of eating meat because they have been transformed into food.' (Adams, 1991) In an exercise similar to the one in the paragraph of this writing on eco-feminism, Adams explains how language ontologizes animals and reduces them to food, much as women have been ontologized to be reduced to sexual beings/objects. In both cases, next to defining the animals/women as objects, the subject of the 'perpetrator' is also eliminated from the scene. (Adams, 1991): Adams starts with the case of women as demonstrated by Sarah Hoagland (1988: 17-18):

"John beat Mary," becomes "Mary was beaten by John," then "Mary was beaten," and finally, "women beaten," and thus "battered women" (Hoagland 1988, 17-18). Regarding violence against women and the creation of the term "battered women," Hoagland observes that "now something men do to women has become instead something that is a part of women's nature. And we lose consideration of John entirely." (Adams, 1991: 137)

The same notion applied to animals as being merely edible occurs similarly, and removes the agency of the human who buys a dead animal to consume them (Adams, 1991): "Someone kills animals so that I can eat their corpses as meat," becomes "animals are killed to be eaten as meat," then "animals are meat," and finally "meat animals," thus "meat." (Adams, 1991: 137) Language, in the example above, creates a detachment from humans to the animals that they eat, after all, when they eat the animal, it is no longer called an animal but by use of linguistics turned into 'meat'. Language does not only ontologize animals when it comes to those who are used for food. The rat specifically, is an animal commonly used for several kinds of animal testing. Also in laboratories, Language, in the form of technical jargon, is used to create detachment. Alice Heim, a Cambridge psychologist that has spoken out against the animal experimentation her colleagues engaged in describes how this works:

“The work on “animal behavior is always expressed in scientific, hygienic-sounding terminology, which enables the indoctrination of the normal, non-sadistic young psychology student to proceed without his anxiety being aroused. Thus techniques of “extinction” are used for what is in fact torturing by thirst or near starvation or electric-shocking; “partial reinforcement” is the term for frustrating an animal by only occasionally fulfilling the expectations which the experimenter has aroused in the animal by previous training; “negative stimulus” is the term used for subjecting an animal to a stimulus which he avoids, if possible. The term “ ” is O.K. because it is an observable activity. The term “painful” or “frightening” stimulus are less O.K. since they are anthropomorphic, they imply that the animal has feelings - and that these may be similar to human feelings. This is not allowable because it is non-behavioristic and un-scientific (...) The cardinal sin for the experimental psychologist working in the field of “animal behavior” is anthropomorphism. Yet if he did not believe in the analogue of the human being and the lower animal even he, presumably, would find his work largely unjustified. (Heim, 1971: 150)

Peter Singer notes how this jargon, used to disconnect and detach humans from their non-human test subjects is applied in the entire field of animal testing, mentioning for example *The Whole Rat Catalog*, which advertises experimenting equipment for small animals ‘all written in cute advertising jargon’. (Singer, 1975: 39) “Of the transparent plastic rabbit restrainers, for instance, the catalog tells us: “the only thing that wiggles is the nose!” (Singer, 1975: 39) Re-

turning to Evan's art work *Companion*, if the powers of language can trick us into eliminating the animal from the process of eating meat, than how can language, now suspicious to rather distort and manipulate meaning, help us in our conversation with the white rat, still looking at us in anticipation, surrounded by human language. This would be the time to focus and try to make sense of the rats rather mysterious surroundings.

The meaning of the sentences tied to the animals body are mysterious. Phrases like '*and now we are married even though it slows us down it insulates sufficiently*', attached to the rats tiny fingers, or '*because things taste better when you cut them in half, saying we gets I into heaven*', pointing at the rodents stomach, do not add up to an easy translatable message. Although there seems to be some method to the madness in the fact that all lines are attached to parts of the body that a human would associate them with; marriage and the fingers match for the association of a wedding ring, a stomach and cutting things up match for the association of where our food ends up. Still, the images do not completely add up as marriage is an exclusively human institution and rats are not commonly known to cut up their food before eating it, nor are we aware of them engaging in any of the other activities spelled out in the sentences around the animal. What could be the reason for presenting these human activities around this animal? Formal descriptions of the work argue how the artist 'refuses categorisation' (Ja Natuurlijk 'wall text' 2013) and tries to 'blur the boundaries of species' (Ja Natuurlijk wall text' 2013) It could be that, as Kokke suggest in the Ja Natuurlijk publication, the artist is trying to make us identify with the rat, in which his method of assigning the rat with written human language is a sophisticated form of anthropomorphism. However the notion of making animals 'come to life' by granting them human language, a human voice, is problematic. In her article *Posthuman Performativity* (2003), feminist theorist Karan Barad argues how language has been granted too much power. "It seems that at every turn lately every 'thing' - even materiality, is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation" (Barad, 2003: 801). she continues: "How did language come to be more trustworthy than matter? Why are language and culture granted their own agency and historicity while matter is figured as passive and immutable, or at best inherits a potential for change derivatively from language and culture?" (Barad, 2003: 801) Within Barad's argument, if we link power and agency to having a human voice and mastering human linguistics, this is an other way of limiting the conversation to humans only and degrading non-human life to the level of passive matter. Indeed, if we

would link agency to the ability to speak, animals would not have agency at all. It would not make sense within the post-humanist framework of this writing to stay with the notion that agency can only be linked to something as typically human as the mastering of human linguistics. Paul Kokke represents exactly the humanist idea of linking language to power and agency when he states that as a result of the words surrounding the rat in *Companion* “the animal evolves into a creature equal to man.” (Kokke, 2013: 128)

The alternative to this linguistic relating offered by Barad is an understanding of discursive practices in which meaning is an ongoing performance of the world and discursive practices are the boundary-making practices. ‘Matter’, according to Barad, is a doing, it is the materialization of phenomena: agentially intra-acting components (Barad, 2003) The result of such a performative understanding of discursive practices then, is that these practices can no longer solely be human-based. Humans are only part of the ongoing performance of the world, as such they can only partially define it. Barad’s article is not per definition an article about animal rights, but we can consider how a performative understanding of discursive practices can lead to more agency for non-human animals. Agency, for that matter, is defined by Barad as a relationship, and not as something that someone ‘has’ (Barad, 2003). Note the parallel between Haraway’s (animal) *rights, emerging in interaction* (Haraway 2003), and Barad’s (animal) *agency, emerging in relationships*. (Barad, 2003) They both offer a method (interaction/relationality), by which ‘the animal’ can be considered by humans more actively, and thus they are perspectives with great potential for human/non-human relating. Unfortunately, the non-human animal still has neither interaction, nor a relationship, to the person eating it. Not like the rat in ‘Companion’ is forming relations with the spectator. We return to the question of the significance of surrounding words of human sentiments surrounding the rat. What can we make of the antropomorph animal in this painting? The peculiar thing about this very artwork is the fact that this seems to be a rather sophisticated form of anthropomorphism; this is not the usual furry human approach or for example the way animals are portrayed in Disney movies (with human sentiments, human features, human relations, and a simplified and romanticized story to relate to) but a more complex one where the animal still looks like an animal, and the sentences tied to it would still be complex even when applied to a human. This artwork does not simplify, and the language does not seem to ‘explain’ or ‘clarify’ anything. What we are dealing with here could be considered something that Deleuze coined an object of fundamental en-

counter (Deleuze, 1994) “an object that forces us to think; something that challenges our habitual being in the world” (Deleuze 1994, 139). Katve Kaisa Kontturi describes in her article *From double navel to particle sign* (toward the a-signifying work of painting, 2013) how an artwork can function as this fundamental encounter. “In contrast to the object of recognition, which serves as a vehicle for the already known, the object of fundamental encounter produces something new in itself” (Kontturi, 2013: 20) She describes a painting where due to chemical processes an unintended spot appears on the painting near the image of a women's navel, creating a peculiar double navel sign, and writes “Whereas the recognizable figure or pose turns the painting into an object of recognition, the obscure double navel and the messy cracking surface produce wonder and amazement, both antithetical to recognition, for there is no history with which to contextualize the double navel” (Kontturi, 2013: 20) I would argue that the rat in Companion functions in a similar way. Whereas the rat turns the painting in an object of recognition, even combined with the arrows indicating its body parts, which call for associations with biology books and anatomical drawings, the obscure texts surrounding the rat produce wonder and amazement, for we don't know how to contextualize them. The smaller texts on the scraps add to this effect, as we can not be sure how much of their placement is intentional and how much is coincidence. The result is a representation that we can not by the rules of cultural and linguistic signification pin down to a meaning that would be ‘right’ in an art historic sense. Instead, the work offers an entrance to connect to its topics without the mediation of a recognizable metaphor, providing a space for the viewer to let the elements of the work connect, or be repelled from their knowledge and experience, creating an *embodied experience* of art, that surpasses the factual recognition of iconography. It becomes a reflection on experience that is fundamental to creating knowledge (Boutet, 2013) Danielle Boutet argues in her article *Metaphors of the mind* in an argument similar to Kontturi's, that: “art making is a way of knowing the world, different from science in the sense that we don't study the same things or the same side of things, or at the same level: where science studies the facts of nature, art studies its meaning” (Boutet, 2013: 30). The thinking process behind this way of ‘knowing the world’ is not one where one ‘finds answers to questions, but rather where one contemplates and experiences situations, themes or feeling complexes’ (Boutet, 2013: 30) The difference between the epistemologies of science versus art are defined by Boutet as the *factual truth* that science seeks (observable, quantifiable, and repeatable (Boutet, 2013: 39)), versus the *experien-*

tial truth of art, which seeks to 'give form and material existence, its criteria being relevance and significance' (Boutet, 2013, 39). 'Science and art should be complementary' she adds, and any culture with a genuine quest for knowledge should integrate both' (Boutet, 2013: 30). I would claim that the experiential truth derived from this reflection on experience which we go through as we encounter a work of art like *Companion*, is the kind of knowledge that can create a new 'language of address' as Rosemarie Buikema calls it, for engaging with the animal problem, as it does not study the facts of nature, but rather their meaning.

In the case of *Companion* this results in considerations very relevant to the question of eating animals such as; how animal rights can emerge without interaction, how can there be agency without a relation, and how do we resist the manipulations of language shaping an anthropocentric world?

ON AMY TAXIDERMISTRY, FROM A TRUE FAN - WHO IS KILLABLE, WHO IS NOT?

Tinkebell, 2011, Stuffed animals, photos, texts, variable dimensions

Art Manifestation Ja Natuurlijk, GEM Den Haag, Collection of the artist



'On Amy Taxidermy, from a true fan' is an installation made by Dutch artist Tinkebell. The installation consists of several taxidermy animals and photos with excerpts from blog entries of the young American taxidermist Amy Ritchie. It is positioned in a square room, and wraps around a smaller square room in the same space taking up six grey walls one can walk through like a corridor. The photo's, blog entries and mounted animals are presented chronologically from the time Amy started her taxidermy to the time where she retired because of the birth of her first child. It covers a time-span of roughly ten years ending in 2010, following Amy from age thirteen to twenty-three. The installation takes off by showing mounts of smaller animals; a mouse, a rat, a mounted squirrel head, all accompanied by photo's of a proud Amy presenting her first rifle and framed excerpts of her journal. Around the corner past the first set of walls are larger animals and several photo's among which photo's of taxidermy competitions and wedding picture.

Along the photo's and mounts are more journal entries. The head of a deer, an large ox-head, a weasel, a complete fox and final pictures and blog entries await across the last corner in the final space of the installation. New in this section are photos of several paintings that Amy made; paintings that Tinkebell herself describes as 'quite awful' (VernissageTV, 2011). The paintings, which admittedly look like a child drew them, depict hunting scenes and trophies. The grand deer and ox heads are the impressive final parts of the installation, right across a photo of Amy with her newborn child, announcing her early retirement. Within the chronological timeline, all objects seem to be randomly scattered throughout the space. Some objects pinned to the wall, like the squirrel mount that clings to the grey wall as it would to a tree, and some mounted on side tables, resulting in them looking more like homely decorations.

With the installation, a little pink book was published sharing more information about the taxidermist, like details about how the young Amy Ritchie developed an interest in taxidermy from admiring mounts she had seen in museums, and how she started practicing skinning animals and tanning the hides of dead critters that she found near her parents home, a 5 acre farm in Midland, N.C. when she was only thirteen years old. To share her hobby she used an online journal under the name *Amy Taxidermy*, showing her trophies, reporting her progress, and sharing her goals. The list of animals she has skinned after a year of practice mentions: 'a king snake, garter snake, squirrel, rabbit, possum, raccoon, and three rats. All except

for the rats were found dead; ‘hit in the road, in most instances’⁵. The rats are the first animals that Amy kills herself, because a year into her new hobby, Amy can not be satisfied anymore with picking roadkill from the streets, and she convinces her parents to let her own a gun. Age fourteen, she starts hunting and stuffing more, larger animals, and selling her mounts on ebay. Dutch artist Tinkebell, notorious for killing her own cat and crafting it into a handbag, stumbled upon Amy’s website when looking for interesting Taxidermy items online more than ten years ago. In an interview with VernissageTV upon the first revealing of the installation *On Amy Taxidermy..*, she explains how she bought one of Amy’s mounts and continued to buy a new one every year. She concludes the interview by stating that by now, she proudly calls Amy ‘her muse’ (VernissageTV, 2011) Tinkebells private collection and fascination for Amy resulted this installation which, not unlike many other of Tinkebells’ works, started a wave of shock typical for the art of Tinkebell. Clemens Driessen, for the *Ja Natuurlijk* publication describes Tinkebells art, and Amy’s work in relation to it, as follows:

“Works by Tinkebell such as the infamous handbag made of her cat aim to expose the inconsistencies in how we relate to other animals, but the handbag has found its match in this innocently smiling teen girl posing with a large gun and a tableau of dead squirrels. This work helps to recall that we are all continuously implicated in the killing of animals, often inadvertently and indirectly. In comparison, Amy is intimately engaging with non-humans albeit in a destructive and objectifying manner.” (Driessen, 2013: 82)

Tinkebells private collection and fascination for Amy resulted this installation which started a wave of shock typical for the art of Tinkebell. Her provoking artworks - often consisting of living animals and/or reconfigurations of dead animal bodies have sparked national and international cries of outrage. Even though for this thesis, I have chosen the theoretical approach of new materialism over a biographical approach, some of the past controversy surrounding Tinkebell I will elaborate on here, as it resulted in the fact that Tinkebell as a person at one point became more prominent than her art, and for any work of art to exist within the oeuvre of such a controversial artist is bound to change the very way that people perceive the work in the first place. Driessen already mentioned Tinkebells infamous handbag made of her own cat, which is a good introduction to the subject: Tinkebell’s career as well as her notoriety skyrocket-

⁵ From Amy’s weblog, available at amystaxidermy.com.

eted in 2004 when she became world news for skinning her own domestic cat and turning her fur into a purse. Along with pictures of the work Tinkebell uploaded a manual *What to do with your cat?* in which she described step by step ‘how to kill your cat and then how to prepare a bag of it.’ (Tinkebell, 2004⁶) She later stated:

“When I broke the neck of my sick cat and then made a handbag of her skin, I honestly had no idea of what I had got myself into. The project was an artwork entitled My dearest cat Pinkeltje with which I wanted to launch a discussion about the hypocrisy of how we keep animals both as part of our families and simultaneously as a commodity to be consumed. We live in a culture where the origin of our food or clothing is seldom seen and we hand our sick pets over to an expert to be given a lethal injection to end their suffering.” (Tinkebell, 2004⁷)

The cat, she stated, was miserable and instead of asking for pet euthanasia at the vet, of whom Tinkebell stated cat was terrified, she killed the animal herself by breaking her neck. (Tinkebell *What is cruel?*, 2009) The artist allegedly got 100.000 hate mails including numerous death threats in response to the work, which goal was exactly to question why our society is so disgraced by a domestic animal being killed, while it is perfectly accepted that millions of animals like pigs, cows and chicken are killed for consumption. It aimed to question why we do feel responsible for an animal with a name, and not for one without a name. Why do we mourn the life of a cat, not the life of a pig or cow. Why are the vulnerability and precariousness of the cat’s life acknowledged, and not those of our ‘production animals’? Judith Butler, in her *Precarious Life* (2004) starts from a set of questions including “Who counts as human? Whose lives count as lives? And finally, what makes for a grievable life?” (Butler, 2004: xiv) The cat’s life is grievable, the pig’s life is not. By killing her cat “with her own hands and stuffing it, making it into a hand bag as a product for consumption, thereby directly bridging the gap between house pet and animal for consumption/ production”, Tinkebell wants to bring our moral inconsistency to light and address contradictions in the way we regard animals⁸ Tinkebell is hailed for campaigning animal rights by some, and hated for violating those same animal rights by others.

⁶ web: looovetinkebell.com/pages/my-dearest-cat-pinkeltje

⁷ web: looovetinkebell.com/pages/my-dearest-cat-pinkeltje

⁸ Official description for “My Dearest Cat Pinkeltje” at Tinkebell’s website. Available at looovetinkebell.com

By provoking -often negative- feedback, the artist tries to offer “an extreme incentive for the discussion of our morals and the way society is developing”⁹ It is exactly this strong social embeddedness and discursive dimension that makes it challenging to focus of the material dimension of this work. The starting point for ‘bringing the material back into the equation’ in this case study could be the realization that if ever there was an artwork where the emergence of the work can not be attributed to the workings of the artist alone, this is it. Presented by the artist as an homage to her muse, the work is in a way as much Amy’s as Tinkebell’s; in fact it is a rearrangement of Amy’s work, and Tinkebell adds new meanings to the work by providing it a brand new context. This new context works on at least four levels.

First of all, whereas Amy presented the mounts as single autonomous works showing off her skills to the taxidermy aficionado, Tinkebells installation, displaying mounts, photos and journal entries is more than the sum of its parts and shifts the focus from the individual object to the very person Amy Ritchie and her unusual hobby.

Second, this collection of stuffed animals triggers a very different response because the mounts, animals, or specimen as Amy likes to call them, have changed location, thereby changing both the context of the work and the kind of audience viewing it. A stuffed animal presented at the World Taxidermy Championships in Reno is very different to a stuffed animal presented at Art Manifestation Ja Natuurlijk about ecological issues. In one case, the work is appreciated for the quality and the talent of the taxidermist, in the other, the context or art and ecology raises questions to the viewers not only about the esthetics or craftsmanship of the work but also about the very message behind the installation.

As a consequence of the location shift, the audience changes as well. In one case the works are viewed mainly by taxidermy connoisseurs, and in the latter, by people interested in either art, ecology, or both. One bound to have more appreciation to the art of killing and stuffing than the other.

Finally, Tinkebell does not only change the physical location of the works, but by appropriating the work to herself and relocating the mounts to a position within *her own oeuvre*, she adds to the work the association with Tinkebell’s art which are all strongly controversial works. Being familiar with Tinkebell’s work makes it impossible not to draw parallels between Amy’s mounts and Tinkebell’s own taxidermy works, for example Tinkebell’s probably most

⁹ Official description for “My Dearest Cat Pinkeltje” at Tinkebell’s website. Available at loovetinkebell.com

(in)famous work ‘what to do with your cat?’

So we can see that Tinkebell rearranged the works by Amy, changed their location, changed their audience, and changed their artistic context. One could state that these shifts give the objects in the installation their strong discursive dimension. However, the argument can be deepened to another level. The individual pieces remain Amy’s work as a taxidermist, but even she cannot be held completely responsible for the emergence of the ‘things’ in this installation, as the fur that covers her mounts was grown by the several animals originally wearing it, shaped by their age, environment, and random occurrences in their lives. Tinkebell, Amy, the animals and the environment where they originally lived are co-responsible and indebted to each other and other collaborators when it comes to the emergence of this installation. A side effect of this co-responsible emergence of these things is the fact that the lines between culture and nature are effectively blurred. Take for example the little black scratch behind the stuffed squirrels ear. What caused this ‘flaw’ in the piece? Did the critter hurt himself in a fight with another animal? Scratch himself because of flees, or a skin infection? Is the scratch a result of uncarefulness during the taxidermy process by Amy? Or simply a result of rough transportation? We do not know whether to assign the scratch to natural causes or to artistic craftsmanship. We do not know whether the scratch was intended, we do not know whether the artist, be it Amy or Tinkebell, mastered the process, and the desire of the viewer to retrieve a message from this sign consequently is never fulfilled because so many actors - coincidence included - played their part in the emergence of the ‘thing’. This ‘thing’ which in its current state as a work of art exhibited in a museum has changed so drastically in its value compared to its former state as an animal roaming the fields surrounding a farm in Midland, N.C. In the following section, I would like to discuss the rights of things, versus the rights of animals.

“the rights of things are already much better established than those of plants or animals, and have been for a long time. Whole classes of objects - works of art, religious icons, valuable commodities, private fetish objects and public totems, already have special status. The old ethical conundrum about rescuing a Rembrandt or an infant from a burning building makes sense only in a culture that believes some objects have a strong claim to human protection, care, and loving attention.” (Mitchell, 2003: xi)

The stuffed animals of *On Amy Taxidermy..* are not to be touched. Museum guards and security cameras are keeping a keen (digital) eye on the items providing protection from damage, theft

or otherwise, harm. The protection these once-animals enjoy now, stands in sharp contrast with the lack of protection they enjoyed when they were still alive, most of them being legally killed for no reason. These animals enjoy more protection and care while they are on display in a museum now that they are dead, than they did when they were alive. Their value, expressed in the most superficial (and humanist, anthropocentric) means possible; money, has increased greatly by being transformed from living beings to art objects. Ironically, the objectification that women defy as it is considered a tool of devaluation of women, for animals, only increases their value. The fact that an animal is of more value objectified than living is nothing new; the meat industry would not exist if there was not more money to be made from the smaller animal parts in the form of meat than from a living creature. However, the amount that one pays for a work by Tinkebell stands in sharp contrast to the lack of value these animals enjoyed when they were alive, and not only by becoming 'art'; Amy already charged a good hundred dollar for one of her squirrels. I would like to refer to W. J. T Mitchell, as he states:

“The rights of things are so well established, in fact, that it might make sense to work up from them towards the animals, rather than downward from the human. A person, after all, is from one point of view just another thing. Even “the king is a thing” as Hamlet noted, a “bare forked animal” that has big ideas about itself.” (Mitchell quoted in Wolfe, 2009: xii)

Most significant about the art of Tinkebell and *On Amy Taxidermy..*, is the fact that it makes the actual killing of animals visible. Although most of us interact often with the dead animal by eating meat or wearing animal skin, the actual killing of the animals usually remains out of sight. In an interview for animal activist group PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), sir Paul McCartney makes the remark that if slaughterhouses would have glass walls, we would all be vegetarians ('Glass Walls' McCartney for PETA, 2011). These words reflect the general idea that if people were around to witness the actual killing of animals, they would refrain from supporting these activities altogether. *On Amy Taxidermy..* makes the actual act of killing most visible. Amy is photographed with her gun, her written reports of the kills presented next to it, along with photos of her slicing a freshly killed deer open. Most poignant, the material result of this act of killing is visible in the taxidermy specimen, beady eyes staring into the museum space as if forever caught in their last moment of life. It has become inevitable to write about the actual act of killing in this reflection. And within the sketched frame-

work of posthumanism and ecofeminism, the killing of animals itself has become very problematic. If we consider the moral codes we apply to human life and the fact that for many reasons derived from posthumanism and ecofeminism, species alone can be no qualification to discriminate, the question of why the killing of animals would be justified is almost painfully obvious. Animal rights activists have applied this reasoning often and referred to the systematic killing of animals in factory farms as forms of genocide, an equating that Donna Haraway refers to as outrageous, since 'atrocities (...) deserve their own potent languages and ethical responses, including the assignment of priority in practice' (Haraway, 2003: 51). In her book *When Species Meet* however, she does respond to the question of the killing of animal, in a way informed by Derrida's 'logic of sacrifice'. (Haraway, 2008)

Within the logic of sacrifice (...) every living being except Man can be killed but not murdered. To make Man merely killable is the height of moral outrage; indeed, it is the definition of genocide. Everything but Man lives in the realm of reaction and so calculation; so much animal pain, so much human good, add it up, kill so many animals, call it sacrifice. Do the same for people, and they lose their humanity. (...) Derrida understood that this structure, this logic of sacrifice and this exclusive possession of the capacity for response, is what produces the Animal, and he called that production criminal, a crime against beings we call animals. (Haraway, 2008: 78)

What Haraway suggests, is not at all dividing the worlds beings into those who can be killed and those that can be murdered, but also not to imagine a life outside killing (Haraway, 2008). She suggest that perhaps the commandment 'thou shalt not kill', should read 'thou shalt not make killable' instead (Haraway, 2008: 80), so that the problem shifts from 'figuring out to whom such a command applies so that "other" killing can go on as usual' (Haraway, 2008: 80) but rather to live 'responsibly within the necessity and labor of killing'. (Haraway, 2008: 80)

'Human beings must learn to kill responsibly. And to be killed responsibly, yearning for the capacity to respond and to recognize response, always with reason but knowing there will never be sufficient reason.' (Haraway, 2008: 81)

The first case study, which represented relational issues between human and non-human animals brought forward how in order for animal rights/agency to emerge, there is a need for interaction/a relation, and it argued how there is a lack of such interaction with the animals

that we eat through the fact that the killing and processing of animals for food is kept well out of the consumers view. Interestingly, in this work of art, which represents more the actual act of killing, the artwork seems to step in exactly where 'we' lack this interaction with the animal, as it brings to the forefront the act of killing itself, the very act that 'we' generally do not get to see. In an uncredited interview with Tinkebell called *What is Cruel?* (2012) the artist is asked whether it was not cruel of her to kill her cat in order to craft it into a purse'. Tinkebell responds by denying that her self proclaimed act of love for her cat, was cruel: "a hamburger from Burger King, *that is cruel!*" (*What is cruel?* 2012) *On Amy Taxidermy..* manages to step in where where we lack the interaction with the animal by emphasizing, even glorifying the act of killing non-human animals. It is upsetting to many. As would be perhaps - at the risk of stating the obvious - lifting the veil of what happens to that Burger King hamburger, before it is a Burger King hamburger.

BABEL FAT TOWER - OF PROGRESS AND DECLINE

Raul Ortega Alyala, 2009. Fat, bones, lights, table (IKEA Billsta) 70 cm (table height) 74 x 118 cm

Art Manifestation Ja Natuurlijk, GEM Den Haag. Courtesy of Rokeby Gallery, London



The structure of the 'Babel Fat Tower' rises from a white round table in a central position of the largest exhibition room of the GEM. The tower is surrounded by three lamps that radiate a warm glow. From a distance, Babel Fat Tower looks edible, inviting associations of white chocolate or sugar frosted cake, however, a closer look reveals the black drizzles of blood on top of the tower, the dead flies on the table surface, and the oily liquid dripping over the edges of the table. A strong flowery odor fills the air around the sculpture. The smell is not unpleasant, but, upon closer look, the fat, blood, and animal bones that become visible create an awareness that the perfume is only here to mask the natural smell of the work; a smell of decay. The artist is not mysterious about the material of the work; the title of the work reveals that this sculpture is constructed of fat. Indeed, the Babel Fat Tower was constructed of animal fat and bones.

The fact that this tower was made out of fat has everything to do with the artist's fascination for food. Including performances, videos, texts and objects, in his artistic work Raul Ortega Ayala explores food beyond bodily sustenance, *Stroom* Den Haag, center for visual arts and architecture which hosted Ayala's solo exhibition in 2011 describes his work as following in their online publication: "investigating its intrinsic significance in life's rituals and cycles, its role in religion and culture, as well as its interconnections with our emotions and psychologies." (Stroom, 2011) *Babel Fat Tower* was initially part of Ayala's exhibition *Living Remains*, which evolved entirely on the subject of food. It included the performance *Melting Pots*, for which the artist created a buffet and invited volunteers to eat with him. The buffet was in fact a recreation of the one that was served in the Twin Towers' famous restaurant *Windows on the World*, and the food was served on kitchenware that was suggested to be made from the recycled debris of the towers, (Stroom, 2011) Other works included the performance *The Last Supper* which recreated the 'original' biblical meal as it was described to be enjoyed by the Twelve Apostles. The remains of both performances were left to decompose throughout the course of the exhibition. *Tomatina/Tim* is a video diptych in which the behavior of Tomatina festival goers in Spain is paired with American competitive eater Tim, who is seen eating forty hotdogs in ten minutes. "exploring issues of decadence, abundance, and excess. Ortega Ayala interprets these phenomena as involuntary metaphors of our times." (Stroom, 2011)

Babel Fat Tower invites its spectators to engage with the work on a very sensory level. Sight and smell are directly addressed in a way that creates associations of taste. The air surrounding the work is warm and affects the direct environment by attracting flies. However, this sensory focus is shifted into a matter of language and cultural representation as one recognizes the structure as either a replica of Pieter Brueghel the Elder's *Tower of Babel* painting (1563) or otherwise recognizes the biblical tower in the work by sight or by acknowledgment of the title. The fact that the work represents a famous biblical scene shifts the attention from matter to linguistics. This work is relatively new and therefore does not have an extended history of interpretations yet, however, all earlier observations on the work - by galleries and museums hosting it - are found in the works' biblical symbolics. Ayala's representing gallery Rokeby London described the *Babel Fat Tower* as "a biblical symbol of vanity and pride" (2010), whereas gallery Akinci, which exhibited the *Tower* in 2011, coins it more generally a 'metaphor of our times.' (Akinci, 2011): "In general the *Tower of Babel* can function as the eternal ruin, symbolizing development, human hubris and decay all at once." (Akinci, 2011) Most recently, 'Art Manifestation Ja Natuurlijk' which housed the *Babel Fat Tower* from March to August 2013 at the GEM Den Haag described the *Tower* as follows:

"A near anthropological interest in the everyday has led Raul Ortega to an artistic investigation into the social, economic, geographic, political and religious network around food. *Babel Fat Tower* (2009), a visualized outcome of this investigation, is a replica of Pieter Breughel's famed painting *The Tower of Babel* (c. 1565) made out of animal fat. The Biblical symbolism of progress simultaneous with decline hits a nerve in the context of the global politics of food. Over the course of the exhibition the work will slowly melt away." (Kerckhoffs 2013: 137)

The biblical origins of the work appear in every interpretation so far. As a side note to the symbolical biblical significance of the work, it first needs to be remarked how the story of the

Tower of Babel¹⁰ is in fact famous beyond its content. Theologians have stated how over time the verse has gained more meaning than its actual words: while the story is famous for representing Gods judgement over human pride, it never actually mentions what is wrong with the people building the tower (Strawn, 2013). The only clear indication of something wrong with the tower/city, is the given of Gods punitive action. In his essay *Holes in the Tower of Babel*, Theologian Brent A. Strawn argues after considering many interpretations, that the entire tower of Babel story might have been merely a rather elaborate setup for the story of Abraham. (Strawn, 2013) He adds: “Indeed, the history of biblical interpretation could almost be described as a history of gap-filling, and the tower of Babel story is no exception. So, while the text of Gen 11:1–9 does not clearly indicate what the problem is, that has not prevented subsequent readers and interpreters from doing so.” (Strawn, 2013) My aim in presenting Strawns argument over the verse is not to make this a theological debate over the meaning of the verse, nor to find loopholes in earlier interpretations of the work, however before basing the cultural/linguistic interpretation of this work on the notion of Gods punitive actions over human pride, the disputed status of the verse has to be noted, as the interpretation might not be based exactly on the verse itself, but more on the ‘history of gap-filling by readers and interpreters. If in fact the collapsing of the tower of Babel in the Biblical sense is a metaphor of God’s judgement over human pride, and we know that the artist engages with issues of food primarily, Ayala’s tower of fat and animal bones can be interpreted as a metaphor of human ‘pride’ when it comes to excessive consumerism. Compared to the people in the Biblical verse limitless building a tower up to the heavens, the work could be considered as criticism on western food politics employing an ideology of profit seeking and technical progress leading to excess and waste. Think ‘supersize me’, think obesity epidemics, all represented in fat; the very result that builds up beneath our skins when we indulge in excessive food, and not only that, the Babel Tower of consumerism is also literally built of, and over the dead parts of animals. In the following section I will explore how the biblical symbolical “progress simultaneous with decay” (Kerckhoffs,

¹⁰ The story in the bible is to be found in Genesis 11: 1-9 and reads as follows: “Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. 2 As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. 3 They said to each other, ‘Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.’ They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. 4 Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.’ 5 But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. 6 The Lord said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. 7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.” 8 So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city.9 That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth. (New American Standard Bible)

2013: 137) that is implicated by the work, with regards to our eating practices - the very subject of the artists enquiries - can be made explicit.

In general, progress simultaneous with decay can be seen in the fact that through industrial progress, food production is becoming more and more efficient, thus able to provide more food, at less costs expressed in money. However the cost for the environment and health are often not considered in these calculations. Obesity among U.S. adults is estimated anywhere between 25 and 35% (source: CDC find). Meanwhile, a 2004 study by Timothy Jones found that forty to fifty percent of all food ready for harvest in the United States never gets eaten (Jones, 2004), the spending on disposal of food waste is estimated by the U.S Environmental Protection Agency to reach around one billion dollars each year (EPA, 2012). The environmental impact of food disposal is significant and the excess and waste that is involved in it stands in sharp contrast to the 842 million people in the world that, according to the World Food Program (2013) do not have enough to eat.

However this progress followed by excess and waste does not only affect humans and the environment but also the lives of individual animals raised for food. The process transformations in animal farming from the animals' relatively natural conditions on traditional farms, to the now standard mass-production techniques used in factory farming can serve to illustrate the point that the progress in terms of profit on factory farms, negatively affect the individual animals raised for food. This 'progress followed by decay' for the individual animal is most present in the chicken industry, considered by agribusiness promoters to be one of the great success stories of farming (Singer, 1975). The enormous increase of chickens raised for food per year and per square meter, their rapid, hormone induced growth and the value of production efficiency over animal welfare has caused strongly increased mortality rates, as well as an increase of sick and crippled chickens, and social distress among the birds that causes feather picking and cannibalism. Suffocation through piling is common, as is chronic pain from beak trimming. These are a few examples of the 'vices' of factory farmed chicken that Peter Singer reports in his *Animal Liberation* (1975), of which the intention here is to quickly illustrate how the 'progress' in production efficiency has caused major negative effects for the individual animals which are being consumed. Whether the consumer is aware of the practices going on in factory farms when they buy their neatly packaged meat is a valid question as, like has been stated in this writing before, consumers are often well shielded from the origins of their food.

Raul Ortega Ayala has emphasized this fact in an interview about creating the Babel Fat Tower in the Netherlands specifically. The anecdote he shares in this interview is concerned with the bones that supports the tower. The artist recalls:

“I was contacting butchers to ask for bones for the structure of the Babel Fat Tower. None of the butchers I approached had bones. Everything comes pre-packed. Even the butchers are detached from the natural elements of the very thing they’re selling. This reminds me of the Mc Donalds commercial where hamburgers grow from plants like flowers grow.. “ (Raul Ayala Ortega, 2013)

The artist makes a point out of expressing explicitly the *material* problems of creating this work in the Netherlands specifically, questioning whether we have our relation to the source of the the things we consume. His concerns are made more then clear with his *Babel Fat Tower*, and not only his concerns, but if the biblical symbolic interpretations are correct, also his conviction of the finity of the naive, excessive and wasteful way that we consume are on display, as downfall (represented as God’s judgement) is represented in the fact that the Tower slowly melts, and collapses.

In the process of *Babel Fat Tower* collapsing, the carnal, morbid, and confronting face of the work becomes visual. The outer layers of fat melt away and the inner structure of the work becomes visible. The bones, that were so hard to obtain, become visible, only after the pressure of the warm fat made all remaining blood seep out and off of them. The earlier so clean, crisp, tower takes a morbid turn and starts to look more like a carcass, after decay has set in and displays the carnal, morbid and nasty part of meat production that consumers are often shielded from. The revealing of this nastiness happens simultaneously with the symbolic collapsing of the tower, almost as if the artist/artwork is trying to transport the message that if the nastiness was really revealed to consumers, the system that causes it would collapse (again, Paul McCarrntney; “if slaughterhouses had glass walls we’d all be vegetarians”) This tower, as well as the biblical one, represents not only human pride, but also the inevitable downfall that follows. Judgement is represented by the three heating lamps that cause the tower to slowly collapse. This means both that the Tower looks different from day to day, and that, eventually, nothing more then a pile of bones and collapsed remains of fat will be visible.

Conclusion

Starting from the conviction that “nothing really convincingly settles the separation of human and animal.” (Haraway, 1991: 151), this thesis sought to explore how ‘eating the other’, thus eating non-human animals, becomes problematic within the framework of posthumanism and ecofeminism. I have done so by first exploring the roots of speciesist attitudes towards non-human others, which lie in Aristotelean classic philosophy’s hierarchic systems of those with superior reasoning powers ruling over those with less, in Biblical creationism that granted man dominion over other being that ‘creepeth the earth’ and in a Cartesian mechanistic world view that reduces everything but humans with their God-granted souls as mere matter to be acted upon. By introducing the ethics of Peter Singer I have offered a popular moral argument for rejecting speciesism on the grounds of ‘equal consideration’, in stead of factual equality. Equal consideration is based on the fact that as the animal can suffer, they have an interest to avoid this suffering, and in this interest they deserve consideration. The interrelatedness of speciesism to other -isms such as sexism and racism was made explicit by introducing several writers from the realm of ecofeminism. These scholars claim that as the system allowing for these different oppressions is in fact similar, the work to end any of the oppressions is valuable. Their claim to extend moral care to non-human others is underlined by posthumanist thinkers such as Donna Haraway, who defies both speciesism and the nature/culture divide by introducing the concepts of Companion Species and naturecultures. From the theoretical part of this thesis flows the answer constructed to the first one of this thesis’ central questions: ‘how does the eating of non-human animals become problematic within the framework of posthumanism/ ecofeminism?’ I argued that if first of all we are generally trying to live ethical lives governed by certain morality, and second, we agree with Singer that “the attitude towards animals of previous generations are no longer convincing because they draw on presuppositions - religious, moral, metaphysical- which are now obsolete” (Singer, 1975: 186), that if we embrace the post-human(ist) conviction that humans are not the great apex of being (Wolfe, 2010) nor the only active, able of feeling, sensing, thinking, suffering, subjects in the world; if we finally appreciate ecofeminism’s claims of parallels between the -isms, and consider the discrimination on the basis of generic qualities to be unjustified and have condemned such behavior when it comes to humans - in the shape of (hetero)sexism, racism, classism - and the likes, *then* this should

lead us to the conclusion that there are in fact no compelling reasons to limit our moral responsibilities to our own species, based on the generic quality of species alone, and we *should* in fact at the very least question the systematic killing of animals for food, as it has become problematic.

The second part of this thesis, which seeks to explore how contemporary art engages with the animal question began to explain how the paradigm dominating the discourse of species hardly shifts as it is dominated by the repetition of the same arguments regardless of new scientific/philosophic arguments. I argued how, considering this paradigm and the fact that the question of the animal is at the complicated intersection of ethics, economics, politics and other dimensions. the animal question is exactly a topic in need of what Rosemarie Buikema calls a new “language of address” (Buikema 2012: 55) Aided by the method of New Materialism, I have explored through these three case studies the field of the animal problem as defined by the theoretical chapter. Through sensory, embodied experience these artwork produce new knowledge with their viewer first of all because their artistic inquiries into the animal question and their unusual way to represent our very usual daily practices, offer incentives to reconsider and deconstruct speciesism. By emphasizing experiential truth as opposed to factual truth, they furthermore can start to fill the gap of our lack of interaction with non-human animals, as they step in and create an embodied experience of connection with a work and its subject; whether it be a memory of a lost pet (*Companion*) empathy for a beast shot by Amy (*On Amy Taxidermy*) or disgust over the waste involved with our food production (*Babel Fat Tower*). This way of knowledge production through experiential truth works through visual rather than linguistic discourse, thus is more independent from language, which can be manipulative and which often functions to remove animals from the very practice of eating meat. As such, contemporary art plays a crucial role in the important and ongoing work of humans, to find answers to the questions concerning our relation to non-human animals.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Adams, Carol, J. (1990) *The Sexual Politics of Meat, A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*, Continuum.

Adams, Carol, J. (1991) "The Social Construction of Edible Bodies and Humans as Predators" in *Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals*; *Hypathia*, No. 6, spring 1991, pp.134-137.

Akinci (2011) "Babel Fat Tower" (Akinci Gallery about Ayala's Babel Fat Tower) Available at www.akinci.nl (Accessed 20 December 2013).

Aquinas, Thomas, (1265–1274) *Summa Theologica*, II, II, Q25, 72, 159.

Ayala, Raul Ortega, (2013) "Opening Interview Art Manifestation Yes Naturally, How Art Saves The World" Reported by C. Wessels for Yes Naturally.

Barad, Karen (2003). "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter". *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(3), Spring Issue, pp. 801-831.

Barett, Estelle, Bolt, Barbara, (2013) "Carnal Knowledge. Towards a New Materialism through the Arts" London, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.

Beauvoir, Simone (1973, originally published in 1949) "The Second Sex" New York, Vintage Books.

Bentham, Jeremy, (1907, originally published in 1780) "An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation" Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Boal, Augusto, (2006) *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed*, New York, Routledge

Boutet, Danielle, (2013) "Metaphors of the Mind: Art Forms As Modes Of Thinking And Ways Of Being" in "Carnal Knowledge. Towards a New Materialism through the Arts" London, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, pp. 29-39.

Brown, Wendy, (1988) "Manhood and Politics, A Feminist Reading in Political Theory" Totowa, NJ; Rowland and Littlefield.

Buikema, Rosemarie, (2012) "Monumental dresses, Coming to terms with racial repression" in: Brigitte Hipfl & Kristín Loftsdóttir (Eds.), Teaching Race with a Gendered Edge, Budapest-New York, Central European University Press, pp. 43-61. Available at: www.academia.eu (Accessed 5 January 2014).

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2013) "Overweight and Obesity", Available at www.cdc.gov (Accessed 3 January 2014).

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F (1994) "What is Philosophy?" New York, Colombia University Press.

Derrida, Jaques, (2008) "The Animal That Therefore I Am", Fordham University Press.

Dombrowski, Daniel, (1997) "Babies and Beasts: The argument from marginal cases" University of Illinois Press.

Driessen, Clemens (2013) "Anthropocentrism", in: Publication Yes Naturally - How Art Saves The World, Den Haag, nai010 publishers, pp. 115-235.

Everyman's Library, (1959) "Politics" London J. M. Dent & Sons.

From bell hooks, (1992) "Eating the other: Desire and resistance." In Black Looks: Race and Representation, Boston: South End Press, pp. 21-39.

Genesis 1-26, New American Standard Bible.

Giligan, Carol, (1982) “In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development.” Cambridge and London, Harvard University Press.

Haraway, Donna (1988) “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question and the Privilege of Partial Perspective”, in *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No.3 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 575-599.

Haraway, Donna (1991). “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century” and “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective”. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.

Haraway, Donna (1997). *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience*. New York: Routledge.

Haraway, Donna (2003). *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.

Heidegger, Martin, (1977) “The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays, trans. W. Lovitt, New York, Garland.

Heim, Alice, (1971) “Intelligence and Personality” Baltimore, Penguin.

Hekman, Susan, (2010) “The Material Knowledge: Feminist Disclosures” Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press.

Hoagland, Sarah Lucia (1988) “Lesbian ethics: Toward new values” Palo Alto, CA: Institute for Lesbian Studies.

Jones, Timothy, (2004) “Using Contemporary Archaeology and Applied Anthropology to Understand Food Loss in the American Food System” Tucson, UA Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology.

Kant, Immanuel, (1780, translated 1963) "Lecture on Ethics" trans. L. Infield, New York, Harper Torch Books.

Kerckhoffs, Dennis, (2013) "Justice for All" in: Publication Yes Naturally - How Art Saves The World, Den Haag, naioio publishers, pp. 135-147.

Kokke, Paul (2013) "Welcome to the World", in: Publication Yes Naturally - How Art Saves The World, Den Haag, naioio publishers.

Kontturi, Katve-Kaisa, (2013) "From Double Navel To Partice-Sign: Toward The A-Signifying Work Of Painting" in "Carnal Knowledge. Towards a New Materialism through the Arts" London, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, pp.17 - 27.

Mack-Canty, Colleen, (2004) "Third Wave Feminism and the Need to Reweave the Nature/Culture Duality" NWSA Journal, Vol 16 No 3 (Fall).

McCartney, Paul (2011) "Glass Walls" (PETA documentary about factory farmed animals) Available at www.peta.org (Accessed 4 January 2014).

Merchant, Carolyn, (1980) "The Death of Nature, Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution" New York, HarperCollins.

Mitchell, W.J.T. Mitchell (2003) "The Rights of Things" in Wolfe, Cary, (2003), "Animal Rites, American culture, the discourse of species, and posthumanist theory", Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, pp. ix-xiv.

Ortner, Sherri, (1974) "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" In Women, Culture and Society, eds. Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere. Stanford, Stanford University Press.

Plumwood, Val, (1992) Beyond the Dualistic Assumptions of Women, Men, Nature" The Ecologist. 22(1): pp. 8-13.

Ritchy, Amy (2001 - present) "Weblog" (Written reports of Amy's hunting trips, taxidermy projects and personal life) Available at www.amystaxidermy.com (Accessed 28 December 2013).

Rokeby (2010) "Babel Fat Tower" (Rokeby Gallery about Ayala's Babel Fat Tower) Available at www.rokebygallery.com (Accessed 20 December 2013).

Rossini, Manuela (2006). "To the Dogs: Companion Speciesism and the New Feminist Materialism" in *Kritikos: An International and Interdisciplinarity Journal of Postmodern Cultural Sounds, Text and Image*, [online] September 2006. Available at: <http://intertheory.org/rossini> (Accessed 5 January 2014).

Ryder, Richard, (1971). "Experiments on Animals," in Stanley and Roslind Godlovitch and John Harris. *Animals, Man and Morals*, Grove Press, Inc.

Singer, Peter (2009, revision of 1975 edition) "Animal Liberation", New York, HarperCollins Publishers.

Singer, Peter and Mason, Jim, (2006), "Eating: What we eat and why it matters", London, Arrow Books.

Spivak, Gayatri, (1988) "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Nelson, C. and Grossberg, L. (eds.), "Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture" Macmillian Education: Basingstoke, pp. 271- 313.

Strawn, Brent A. (2013) "Holes in the Tower of Babel", available at Oxford Biblical Studies Online www.oup.com (Accessed 24 December 2013).

Stroom (2011) "Living Remains" (Art Organization Stroom talks about Ayala's solo exhibition) Available at www.stroom.nl (Accessed 3 January 2014).

Sturgeon, Noel, (1997) "Ecofeminist Natures; Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action", New York, Routhledge.

Tinkebell, “My Dearest Cat Pinkeltje” (Description of the artwork and comments by Tinkebell) Available at looovetinkebell.com (Accessed 26 December 2013).

Vernissage TV, (2011) “Tinkebell: Amy Taxidermy” (Video Report of “On Amy Taxidermy, From A True Fan” and Interview with Tinebell” at Art Amsterdam 2011) Available at <http://www.vernissage.tv> (Accessed 29 December 2013).

Voltaire, (1764), “Dictionnaire Philosophique, s.v. bêtes.

Warren, Karen J. (2000) “Evo-feminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Weil, Kari (2012) “Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?” Columbia University Press
Wolfe, Cary, (2003), “Animal Rites, American culture, the discourse of species, and posthumanist theory”, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Wolfe, Cary, (2010) “What is Posthumanism?” Minneapolis, London, University of Minnesota Press.

World Food Programm (2013) “Food Hunger Map 2013”, Available at www.wfp.org/hunger (Accessed 3 January 2014).