

**When Ideology Meets Reality:
A Discourse Analysis of De Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier**



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1. Abstract

This thesis is the first academic exploration into practical resistance to neoliberal capitalist speciesist exploitation in the Netherlands on an organizational level. More specifically, it addresses the question how two Dutch anti-speciesist organizations use language to challenge, subvert and strengthen hegemonic speciesistic discourse. These two organizations are de Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier.

The differences and similarities between de Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier are obtained through a discourse analysis applying several analytical lenses provided by Feminist and Ecofeminist theory. The resulting levels of analysis are the vision, harms and solutions offered, the respectful representation of non-human interests, the use of euphemisms, neoliberal capitalist biases and material offered for essays and presentation by the two organizations. I conclude that the different strategic approaches indicate a deeply ingrained position from which both organizations strive towards transformation instead of a radical breach with dominant performances of speciesism.

2. Introduction

In his *History of Sexuality* (1990), Michel Foucault predicts an age of biopower:

'Hence there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of "biopower."' (p. 140)

Biopower consists of the governmentation of life on a population level through institutions such as schools, the military and Law. It is an accumulation of individuals that have to be disciplined into hegemonic structures. Capitalism could not have flourished the way it has without this, according to Foucault. Biopower is a system of continuous governance over life and death. Those regarded as autonomous agents are to function within these systems of re-production.

'But a power whose task is to take charge of life needs continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms. It is no longer a matter of bringing death into play in the field of sovereignty, but of distributing the living in the domain of value and utility. Such a power has to qualify, measure, appraise, and hierarchize, rather than display itself in its murderous splendor; it does not have to draw the line that separates the enemies of the sovereign from his obedient subjects; it effects distributions around the norm.' (p. 144)

How this prediction has become. Yet perhaps not quite as Foucault imagined. The total government of lives through technological structures resulting in murderous splendour describes the world of the non-human kept for food. These individuals have been reduced to 'value and utility' more than ever. And it is precisely through structures of qualification, measurement, appraisal and hierarchies that they proliferate. These characteristics are founded on anthropocentric neoliberal capitalism. A complex system of interconnectedness that shapes the way humans interact with other animals.

The biopower of non-humans exists of re-creating life and perpetuated through a system of repetitive genocide. According to neoliberal capitalist thought, feeding the disproportionate number of human beings living today requires full control over the practices known as factory farming. The aim of this specific type of biopower is a growing non-human workforce whose value and utility under speciesist capitalism is reduced to the production of

eggs, milk and flesh. Almost all individuals within this system become the product they produce through extreme violence and cruelty in a macabre process of alienation.

Foucault's notion of biopower helps to think through the relation between humans and non-humans. Human life depends largely on the strict government of non-humans. The result are enormous structures of technologically advanced systems of production in which non-humans are genetically modified, raised and killed to keep the human population alive. A system of biopower within a system of biopower. As such, it derives its hegemonic power from compliance and regulation. Systems of knowledge and law are there to enforce a regime of truth that encourages ignorance and compliance.

Within this regime of truth, the interests of non-humans are almost entirely disregarded in favor of those of humans. This is a form of speciesism: discrimination based on species. Yet, contemporary academic developments do not justify or comply with this way of thinking. Academic fields such as Critical Animal Studies and Critical Animal and Media Studies (CAMS) are developing at an accelerating speed (Khazaal and Almiron, 2016).

Simultaneous to this theoretical transformation, practical resistance to these systems of 'food production' is increasing. Scientific and technological discoveries that provide alternative fuel for the human level of the systems of biopower are developed daily (Le, 2018). Greater numbers of people around the world are opting to follow a vegan or vegetarian diet (Joelle and Quinn, 2018). Political parties such as the Dutch Party for the Animals are on the rise.

Because of the increasing amount of criticism and alternatives to carnistic and omnivore lifestyles, the current moment might be optimistically regarded as a transitional phase. It consists of a transition from a almost completely disciplined population of humans severely detached from its empathetic consideration of other animals to one that restores the intrinsic value of non-human needs and capabilities whilst reconfiguring productions of food (Lee and Lee, 2018).

A central focus point of this transition is understanding the mechanisms that keep the systems of domination in place (Johson, 2012). Understanding these mechanisms can stimulate profound change in rethinking, reconfiguring and reconstituting social institutions. Because the understanding of mechanisms that stimulate or reduce discursive development are so vital to change, there is a wide range of topics that is being researched (Martinelli and Olteanu, 2019). Think for example of psychological studies, linguistic studies, judicial and

developmental studies. Naturally, these fields do not exist in a vacuum and often the findings of one study are useful for other fields as well. Another benefit of the plethora of fields considering alternatives and ways to transition is that it allows for multi-disciplinary approaches. More and more scholars combine different tools, techniques and knowledge to develop more sophisticated approaches to doing research on the human non-human relationship.

Simultaneously, the strategies adopted by organisations outside academia are also developing quite rapidly (Martinelli et. al., 2019). Such organisations play a key role in the transition of theoretical insights into daily reality. They form a vital link between academia and society at large. Therefore, the strategies they use are of interest when researching this transitional phase.

Language plays an important role constructing and maintaining the speciesist system of thought. Although the field of CAMS offers analysis of and alternatives to speciesist language, centuries of speciesism have had a profound impact on the language we use today. This thesis examines the language used by organisations that aim to counteract speciesist practice. Analysis of the ways they use language to challenge, subvert or strengthen speciesism informs us of the extent to which the ongoing transition in behavioral practices is accompanied by a change in linguistic practices. Because language shapes the thought processes underlying behavior, this is crucial to accomplish a profound and lasting change. Put differently, as the speciesist hegemony is dependant on speciesist language and thought, radical resistance to it requires a counter discourse. An examination of the language used by leading anti-speciesism organisations demonstrates what this counter discourse currently looks like and how it reflects recent academic insights.

In order to give as a comprehensive an impression as possible within the limited scope of this master's thesis, I will look at two organisations that have highly different identities and strategies. Wakker Dier (*'Awake Animal'*) identifies itself as a non-profit organisation that uses a campaign-based strategy to create awareness and influence consumer behaviour. De Vegetarische Slager (*'the Vegetarian Butcher'*), on the other hand, is a commercial organisation that sells meatless alternatives to meat products. Both are working on the cutting-edge of modern day transitioning. A thorough analysis of their strategies will therefore yield a rich source of information on ways to do resistance. The result will be both a report of contemporary means of resistance as well as a critical examination of the

functionality of language in engagements with hegemonic speciesist power through the application of sophisticated theories.

The conclusions drawn from the discourse analysis will provide insight into the ways in which two organisations engage with the hegemonic speciesist discourse. These insights are valuable in and of themselves for they show ways in which to perform animalistic resistance. The research question reads ‘In what way do Wakker Dier and the Vegetarische Slager use language to challenge, subvert and strengthen speciesism?’ The goal is that the answer to this question will provide readers with a better understanding of the function of language in the struggle between speciesism and animalism so they will be better equipped to practice meaning making themselves.

3. Theoretical Framework

The aim of this section is to provide the reader with the information required to understand different sites at which de Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier engage with the dominant speciesist discourse. Because of the ideological nature of the engagement, I will briefly explain both ideologies and their connectedness. Once this is clear, I will discuss how different strategies of subversion and resistance can be used. These levels are the words, schemata and narratives and behavioral acts. At each level, animalistic and speciesistic means and methods will be contrasted. Contrasting both world-views helps to clarify the ideologies themselves as well as the way in which de Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier interact with them. I will start with the two structures at ideological level.

3.1 Speciesism and Animalism

Truth claims regarding animal welfare are perceived primarily through two ideological lenses (Almiron and Cole, 2016). The first lens is that of speciesism, the dominant hegemonic discourse that seeks to understand humanity by contrasting it to the animal Other (Dunayer, 2001; Lusk and Norwood, 2012). Speciesist thought and rhetoric consist of speech acts that seek so separate humans from other animals and consolidate human superiority through different meaning making strategies (Dunayer, 2001). Speciesism is the contemporary dominant hegemonic discourse (Lloro-Bidart and Banschbach, 2019; Ryder and Singer, 2017). It regards non-humans as property that occupy an inferior position to humans by definition. Animalism regards non-humans worthy of moral consideration and stresses the

importance of their needs and capabilities in interactions with humans (Joy, 2015; Donovan, 2007; Dunayer, 2001).

To better understand both ideologies, I will discuss them both. It is helpful to keep in mind that these two ideologies are no mere systems of thought. Rather, they are complex networks of interwoven structures, meaning, scripts and schemata. Let's start with the first: speciesism. There used to be a plethora of definitions. Because this was rather troublesome for scholars, Oscar Horta (2009) came up with a workable scientific definition. He defines speciesism as '*...the unjustified disadvantageous consideration or treatment of those who are not classified as belonging to one or more particular species.*' (p. 2).

Horta stresses that this differs from mere anthropocentrism or misothery. Both of the latter can be forms of speciesism and, to some extent, are both pre-requisites of speciesism. Yet speciesism, as Horta defines it, is primarily focused on the mental aspect of consideration that is skewed unjustifiably in favor of humans.

This definition has been used in most of the recent studies on speciesism. Because it offers a kind of uniformity that increases clarity as well as a tested definition, I will stick to it as well. Speciesism is not a static or fixed counter-discourse. Rather, it is being negotiated and altered on a daily basis. This means that each act regarding the human non-human relation changes the understanding and performance of speciesism whilst keeping the initial assumption of human superiority intact.

Animalism on the other hand is not as clearly defined. Perhaps because there is not one single alternative to speciesism but many. Some scholars favor a radical and complete abolition of non-human slavery while others prefer a transitional model of cooperation. For reasons of brevity and clarity, I want to use my own definition of animalism. Animalism, as I define it, consists of an acknowledgement of non-human sentience, capabilities and needs. Animalism is a counter discourse based on a moral egalitarian oriented understanding of all animals that draws on intuition (Adams, 2010; Donovan; Jiminéz Rodriguez, 2017), scientific discovery (Stamp-Dawkins, 2017; 2012) and reason (Engel, 2016; Singer, 2015; DeGrazia, 1996; Sapontzis, 1987). Although the use of the word animalism is new to indicate this discourse, the discourse itself has been around for decades. It can be found in ecofeminism, the feminist care tradition, critical animal studies, critical animal and media studies and other fields.

3.2 *The Role of Neoliberalism*

The moral and ethical considerations regarding the human non-human relationality is greatly distorted by gastronomical and economic preferences (McCullen, 2016; Painter, 2016). Neoliberalism systematically replaces evaluations of justice based on preferences, inherent worth and subjective experience with monetary results. Factory farming is not regarded in terms of non-human suffering and pain rather in terms of profit per pound of flesh. This is how in neoliberal systems considerations of well being are pushed out in favor of economic evaluations through capitalistic processes.

Neoliberal capitalist biases offer specific sets of measuring and evaluation. Measuring is done in terms of profit or the direct and indirect effects of monetary gain. Instead of talking about individuals, kilo's are discussed. Or the price per pound of 'meat'. The evaluation of events is done on large scales and ignores the individuals experience. Both strengthen the speciesist practice of commodification as discussed in the theoretical framework. Using Euros as metric allows for the buying and selling and pushes out moral, ethical and compassionate considerations. Large scale evaluations, that is, talking in millions or billions, ignores the individuals and makes it much harder to understand their suffering and identify with it.

Yet this rather simplistic description has to be unpacked further in order to understand the role of consumer ignorance and normalizing exploitative behaviour such as purchasing and consuming meat and milk. As with other hegemonic systems, speciesist power greatly depends on its practices going unquestioned. This means that critical consumer thought has to be reduced to a minimum in order for the speciesistic discourse to remain dominant. The ways in which this can be challenged and subverted by the two organisations will be discussed here. Because of the complexity of the inter-textual dimension of analysis, three components will be explained in greater depth. These are the use of words, schemata and narratives and behavioral acts.

3.3 *Words*

Words have the power to describe. In this apparently obvious function lies the possibility to give accurate descriptions based on a shared framework of knowledge and meaning. It also allows for distortions and falsehoods. Whenever any situation, act or lived experience is conveyed through words we rely on their accuracy to understand situations. Some words can stimulate us into action whilst others are chloroform in print (Martinelli and Olteanu, 2019).

For the hegemonic speciesist discourse to go unchallenged, it relies heavily on euphemisms (Dunayer, 2001; 2004). Euphemisms help to maintain the consensus in which humans use other animals without acknowledging or considering the high levels of cruelty and violence required to do so. I will explain this in a bit more detail.

The first type of euphemism is found in the false dichotomy separating words used for humans and non-humans. A pregnant human is called a mother and pregnant, a pregnant pig is a sow in gestation. Humans get murdered, animals killed, neutralized, culled, euthanized. Consequently, two separate moral discourses are formed. One for humans, one for non-humans. What is permissible to do a non-human because it is ‘killing a mere animal’ is punishable by law and conscious when done to a human because it is ‘the murder of an innocent person’. In the words of Joan Dunayer (2001)

‘In “animal agriculture” and numerous other forms of institutionalized speciesism, nonhuman animals literally are slaves: they’re held in servitude as property. But few people speak of nonhuman “enslavement.” Many who readily condemn human victimization as “heinous” or “evil” consider moralistic language sensational or overly emotional when applied to atrocities against nonhumans. They prefer to couch nonhuman exploitation and murder in culinary, recreational, or other nonmoralistic terms.’ (p. 4)

Euphemisms are used to reduce the visibility of violence in the meat industry especially (Cole, 2016; Dunayer, 2001). Instead of talking about legs, flesh, cows and pigs, words like steak, bacon, beef and pork are used. The torture factories where thousands of individuals are kept as slaves is known as a farm with livestock. They are culled in a processing plant instead of tortured to death in a slaughterhouse.

The reason behind the use of euphemisms in speciesist discourse is offered by Carol Adams (2016). By separating words used for human and non-human experiences, the violent connotations are partly removed as well. When there is talk of minced meat, there no longer exists an individual cow that was raised and murdered. This language works in tandem with the large levels of invisibility of the violence required to make hundreds of cows into the minced meat. If there is no individual that suffers, there is no need for moral justification. At the dinner table, the non-humans have become food and are themselves missing. They are talked about but not referred to. They are the missing referent at the center of the meal.

Restoring the missing referent can be an act of a vegan or vegetarian killjoy. In the performance of doing happiness, doing family or the social at the dinner table, the joy is largely based on a denial or willingness to buy into the fantasy that limits the visibility of the consequences created by the meal (Twine, 2014). I want to acknowledge that this is largely based on the work of Sarah Ahmed (2017). Restoring the referent by pointing out the suffering required to make the meal breaks the spell of denial or willing blindness. The same principle goes for resisting speciesist discourse. Words used by organisations and their choice of syntax can either consolidate or challenge speciesist euphemisms. It can also restore the missing referents both in terms of the violence used and the ones suffering or help maintaining their invisibility.

3.4 Schemata and Narratives

One of the most relevant aspects of the speciesistic discourse is the commodification of non-humans for economic gains (Taylor and Fraser, 2019; Nibert, 2018; Adams, 2016). The commodification of the non-human exists of all the steps required to turn a living individual into sellable objects. This entails both physical violence (Nibert, 2018) as well as moral blunting (Joy, 2014). On a legal and moral level, it means that economic considerations push out all others (Khazaal and Almiron, 2016). The result of this neoliberal conceptualization and practice is that contemporary considerations of actions that affect both humans and nonhumans are skewed in favor of humans. One such result are the billions of pigs that get to be tortured and murdered each year so that some humans can satisfy their habitually preferred gastronomical sensation of tasting ‘pork’.

Continuation of neoliberal capitalist exploitation requires deep indoctrination into speciesist propaganda (Nibert, 2018). According to Chomsky and Herman (1981), a prime aim of all media is to shape consensus that create docile consumers who do not question the suffering created by their actions. This is still the case with creating pro-meat and anti-vegetarian rhetoric (Freeman, 2017; Malamud, 2017). When it comes to speciesism, it is more than just news media. The indoctrination into the speciesistic narratives start with children’s cartoons and stories (Dunayer, 2017), as well as the food marketed for them (Almiron, 2017) and the things that are hidden for them (Almiron and cole, 2017). Instead of promoting compassion and care, they are aimed at distorting reality and the numbing of emotional attachment.

Contemporary Critical Animal theorists point to childhood indoctrination as a key aspect of buying into speciesist hegemony (Dutkiewicz, 2019; Khazaal et. al, 2016). This indoctrination consists of systemic exposure to speciesist rhetoric and distorted, propagandistic representations of non-humans and their lives. One of the most used examples of this is the notion of the little red farm. Small children grow up reading about happy animals that live on small farms with tons of space. Here the animals enjoy the sun, wind, can explore and are most definitely not confined to small concrete cells and tortured on a daily basis.

The promotion of speciesistic narratives and visibility does not come cheap. Billions of dollars are spend by the exploiters of non-humans to sell their ‘products’ (Nibert, 2018). In the Netherlands, the meat and dairy industry spends hundreds of millions on favorable messages as well (De Boer and Aiking, 2017; De Boer, Schlösler and Aiking, 2014). The incentive for lobbyists and grand-scale campaigns that shape the public mind is quite clear. The way in which consumer choices are being deliberated depends largely on the schemata of the consumer (Joy, 2016). If these are predominantly speciesistic, the consumer will regard the food as ‘meat’ and nothing else. This is successful commodification of a person into a purchasable object. Schemata do more than just objectify.

Speciesist schemata are aimed at keeping the consumption of animal products seem normal, natural and necessary (Joy, 2016). These schemata help individual consumers to ignore the direct consequences of their actions. If behavior is normal, natural and necessary, there is no need to question it. This social psychological strategy has been used by groups of men to oppress women and whites to oppress blacks in the United States of America (Joy, 2016). In order for the inferiority of women and people of color to go unquestioned, it was made to appear either biological, God-given or just plain necessary for the society to exist.

As with the slavery of humans, the process of commodification turns living individuals into sellable products through extreme acts of violence and cruelty. From the consumer’s perspective, commodification consists of the linguistic formations that inscribe meaning into material relationality. This means that the way individuals relate to their environment and make sense of their lived experience is understood through the symbolic. For the non-human, it shapes every inch of their embodied experience. I will illustrate this with an example. Let’s look at the word ‘cow’. In a purely symbolic fashion, it has a rather

limited function. When applied to a specific subset of mammals however it can have tremendous consequences.

Firstly, it separates. Including a limited amount of animals into the category cow excludes others by definition. It situates those born and designated as 'cow' into a pre-existing frame of borders, meaning and knowledge. All of the knowledge labeled 'cow' can be projected on individual cows. Therefore, cows are born into interconnected webs of meaning. Or, their body offers a site for these meanings to be inscribed into.

Secondly, the meaning a cow is born into shapes the perceived experience that humans have when interacting with a being labeled cow. A heavily anthropocentric lens will see a mindless critter incapable of experiencing joy and suffering whereas a better informed person can recognize sentience. This depends on their understanding of the concept of 'cow' rather than on their experience with the specific individual they're interacting with.

Thirdly, existing dominant frames of understanding shape the environment of 'cows'. If thought only of in commercial, monetary, capitalist, speciesist terms, the possible ways in which a cow can experience sensations and emotions are irrelevant. If only the financial profit is to be considered, it is not only preferable to exploit cows, it is to be encouraged. The relational aspects of cows are brought back to their functionality in terms of human utility. Considerations of inherent worth, personhood and moral consideration are pushed out by monetary aim. This, in short, is the politics of lines and division. It is how labels (knowledge) such as 'cow' shape the lives of 'cows' (power).

Hopefully, it has become clear how language and behavior connect to the normalization of speciesism. The regimens of truth are made up from our symbolic meaning which in turn shape and are shaped by the treatment of nonhumans and the performance of speciesism such as buying and eating meat. Categorization does not only shape the 'cow's' experience. It also shapes social thought and the lived experience of human animals. Due to the systems of meaning we are born into, it appears to be normal to pet dogs and cats, eat pigs and chicken and wear cows. It is all based on our schemata's or conceptualizations of the world. And it is at this site of contestation that Wakker Dier and de Vegetarische slager can either challenge existing schemata or try and introduce new ones.

3.5 Behavioral acts: Performing Speciesism

The definition of speciesism provided by Horta (2010) can make it seem a rather passive discourse. This is not the case. I wish to argue that the continuation of the capitalocene, anthropocene and plantationocene as described by Haraway (2016) depends on an active proliferation of the speciesistic worldview. The main argument for this is that the socially constructed separation of humans and other animals along moral lines needs to be continuously reinforced to remain dominant. Like gender, the human-as-unique framework is constantly strengthened, challenged, altered and consolidated.

The process of commodification described earlier is a type of speciesist identity performance transforming humans into consumers and other animals into things. According to the social scripts, a good consumer regards what they purchase solely on the basis of a price/quality comparison (Nibert, 2017). Although sustainability and welfare are increasingly considered as a factor for the quality part, this development is rather slow and does not challenge the moral consideration of murder for meat in the first place. Like adding sustainability into the consumerist equation, animal welfarists strive to add the quality of life lived by the 'meat'. More radical ideologists try to abolish the murder for meat altogether. The struggle between speciesist consumerism and animalism is about keeping the animal's experience in or out when buying food (Nibert, 2017).

The buying of non-humans and using them for human purposes is at the heart of the fascist rituals of the master race, as Brunsma, Iyall Smith and Gran (2016) put it. During my time as a journalist writing on the topic of non-human welfare I discovered a toppling triangle of responsibility. This sinister triad is comprised of three parties, the consumer, slave-owner and supermarkets. The aim of the game is to shift responsibility and actorship when it comes to the exploitation of non-humans. When asked about their part in this repetitive holocaust, slave-holders will say that they are forced to be cruel because otherwise they cannot survive and it are the supermarkets that have to pay more. Supermarkets on their turn point to consumers as the ones that are unwilling to pay and so they have to keep prices, and, consequently, standards of living as low as possible. Consumers point to both supermarkets and slave-holders and say that it does not matter what they do because the real power of change lies with the other parties.

Understanding the proliferation of speciesist practice requires an understanding of this shift of responsibility. As was mentioned before, the speciesist hegemony can only continue when people do not resist but are docile cooperators. Not passive cooperators for they have to

willingly buy into the rhetoric of choicelessness and keep buying ‘meat’ and other ‘products’. Addressing the responsibility of individuals as well as organisations and businesses can help to reduce the ability of parties to invoke this narrative to justify their actions.

To summarize, the comparison between de Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier will be focused on language because of its crucial function in the ideological power struggle. The hegemony of speciesism is dependent on meaning making processes reinforcing the division between humans and other animals. Animalist scholars have identified ways in which language is currently reinforcing this division, such as the use of euphemisms and the formation of schemata justifying the exploitation of non-humans for food. This leads to speciesist behavior, such as buying and eating this food. An animalist counter-discourse is needed to alter these highly complex meaning making processes.

4. Methodology

The meaning making process described in the theoretical framework is by no means straight-forward. It is a highly complex, multi-directional interactive process that requires a thorough analysis of both organisations and their acts. Therefore, I strive towards a method of analysis that reflects and matches this complexity. In this section, I will provide an explanation of the choice to perform a critical discourse analysis, the selection of texts and the way in which these texts will be analyzed. The analysis consists of five components that I will elaborate upon in this section.

4.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

As discussed in the theoretical framework, the clash between speciesism and animalism is a clash between a hegemonic discourse and a counter discourse. Van Dijk (2008a; 2008b; 2011), Fairclough (1992; 2003; 2013), Rymes (2016) and others have developed a set of tools that is being used in a broader context of critical discourse analysis and forms the foundation of all Critical Animal and Media Studies discourse analyses. These methods of doing universal Critical Discourse Analysis are useful. Yet, they become much more powerful tools of analysis when combined with instruments developed specifically to examine levels of speciesism. These specific tools have been provided by Núria Almiron, Matthew Cole and Carrie Freeman (2017) as well as others. These scholars have taken the broad framework of Critical Discourse Analyses and adapted it to fit a more anti-speciesist agenda.

According to Stibbe (2012), the main difference between general Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and CDA specifically focused on speciesism is that the latter explicitly aims at the subversion of speciesist linguistic structures. This does not differ much from Van Dijk's notion of CDA. According to Van Dijk, a critical discourse analyst takes the perspective of the oppressed in analysing the (re)production of dominance and inequality (2008a). The difference is that in animalistic discourse analysis the oppressed are non-human animals.

It is important to be aware that there are no clear-cut guidelines on how to perform a critical discourse analysis. Scholars have offered a wide range of examples, advice and guidelines yet there is no one CDA. My own understanding is that a trained discourse analysis is aware of different perspectives and functionalities that shape the meaning making process. In other words, to look through different lenses at a text and see what is going on in terms of content, context and construction. I will elaborate on my analytical approach in the final part of this section.

4.2 Selection of Research Data

Because a critical discourse analysis requires discourse, most scholars have looked at written messages (Rymes, 2016). Because of the increasing popularity of the internet and its all pervasive influence on daily life, most animal-rights oriented media scholars focus on digital media such as websites, social media and other platforms (Almiron and Cole, 2017). Besides offering an easy accessible source of information, these platforms usually have a large number of readers and are therefore highly relevant when it comes to shaping social cognition.

Following the choice of medium is making a selection of texts that adequately represent the organisation's discursive strategies. This means that the scope of the texts has to be broad enough yet not be cherry picked to serve the illustrate a specific agenda. There is quite a difference between the two websites. Wakker Dier offers an elaborate website with news-items, information pages, ways to participate and suggestions to eat 'animal friendly'. In short, it offers information on animal welfare in general. De Vegetarische Slager focuses on, well, itself. They offer information on the products they make, their restaurant, the webshop and how they have been covered in the media.

To get a representative image of these organisations while remaining within the scope of a master's thesis research, I decided to exclude the news section on each website. Even though the texts that are published there remain accessible, they lose relevance after a relatively short period of time. Therefore, I suspect that they are not read as often as the texts in the other sections. In the case of de Vegetarische Slager, the news section features links to publications by other media instead of texts written by the organisation itself. As the aim of this research is to examine the use of language by the organisations themselves, these fall outside of the scope of this research. For these reasons, I decided to exclude the news sections from my research. I also confined this research to the Dutch versions of the organisations' websites, even though de Vegetarische Slager has made its website available in seven different languages. While a comparative analysis of these would offer insights into cultural and linguistic factors, it falls outside of the scope of this research.

Both de Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier offer literature specifically designed for young people. I will pay special attention to these texts, that are presented as highly suitable for children interested in animal rights that want to know more about the subject, write an essay or give a class presentation on it. Because of the crucial role of the views formed during childhood, the counter discourse aimed at young people is very relevant to this research.

4.3 Analysis

In order to grasp the complexity of meaning making processes I distinguish five themes in my analysis. Each theme will be dealt with in its own section. The first section explores each organisation's vision on the transition to a more animalist world. This consists of their depiction of the harms of current situation of non-humans exploited for food, the solution they envision and the mechanisms they offer to reach their goals. This section will provide a more thorough understanding of the role each organisation hopes to take in the animalist transition. Moreover, it offers insights into the language the organisations use for explicit resistance: their descriptions of harms, strategies and solutions potentially affects the schemata's of their readers concerning these themes.

The second and third section deal with more implicit and unconscious uses of language to challenge, subvert or strengthen speciesism. As explained in the theoretical framework, language can be speciesist in implicit ways. Debra Merskin and Carrie Freeman

(2017) have developed a set of guidelines to promote animalist media coverage based on respectful representation. These scholars drew on a wide range of critical media studies and critical animal studies in order to develop a set of guidelines to avoid speciesist writing. Because of the limited word-count for this thesis and to increase readability, I will summarize the most relevant guidelines in the context of de Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier.

1. Be clear about who are included in the term ‘animal’.
2. Avoid misleading euphemisms.
3. Adopt proper pronoun of individuality, personhood and gender.
4. Avoid “humane washing”; do not offer or reproduce misleading narratives aimed at reducing the visibility of suffering.
5. Avoid gendered messages that promote a linkage of gender stereotypes and animals. In other words, compassion and ecological responsibility are to be promoted as gender-neutral traits and the ‘meat eating masculinity’ should be avoided.
6. Be clear about stakeholders and those affected by policies.
7. Take on the non-humans perspective when they are the primary individuals affected.
8. Use language that acknowledges the non-human’s sentience.

While these were originally intended as guidelines for writing, they also form useful tools of analysis. These clear recommendations can be viewed as an operationalization of some of the less concrete factors mentioned in the theoretical framework. As such, they provide clear guidelines to measure (potentially unconscious) use of speciesist language. Because animalism is the opposite of speciesism, they also help us measure the degree to which the language used by the organisations adheres to the norms recent scholarship has produced. In the second section of the findings, I will do brief analysis of the general level of respectful representation on the websites of de Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier. The limited length of this thesis does not allow for an in-depth discussion of each of the guidelines.

After getting a general impression, I will take a closer look at the second guideline: Avoid misleading euphemisms. As has been discussed in depth in the theoretical framework, euphemisms are a core element of speciesist hegemonic control. Euphemisms actively distort reality and thereby shape schemata, social cognition and actions. Besides, as they vary between different languages, previous findings about speciesist language in English texts do

not necessarily apply to the Dutch context. For these reasons, I decided to examine the presence of euphemisms more extensively.

As explained in the theoretical framework, the current speciesist hegemony is no isolated phenomenon. Rather, it is enforced by and linked to the hegemonic ideology of neoliberal capitalism. The fourth section deals with neoliberal capitalist biases. These entail a broad range of ideological value systems. As is explained earlier, it is easiest to contrast these with animalistic systems of valuing. The metric in which the lives of non-human individuals are measured in, for example, can be a utilitarian cost-benefit analysis from a purely economical metric in the capitalist perspective. It can also be the extent in which preferences, capabilities and emotions are being fulfilled or thwarted in the animalistic view. This is a central clash between specialist and animalistic thought.

Analysis of neoliberal biases demonstrates the depth of the resistance performed by Wakker Dier and de Vegetarische slager: Do they merely oppose speciesism or do they also resist to the underlying neoliberal capitalist ideology underlying it? The way they relate to neoliberalism in their texts influences whether their readers will understand speciesism as an isolated phenomenon or as interconnected to neoliberalism. The analysis of neoliberal biases thus indicates the extent of the ongoing transition.

The fifth section is dedicated to the performance of animalism. Our mental scripts and schemata largely shape our behavior. Therefore, they also shape the relation humans have with non-humans. Each interaction is shaped by our understanding of the other. Yet in most situations, there are no clear behaviours that result from our ideas. A deeply passionate animalist may choose to adapt to a vegetarian diet, a vegan one or consume animal products she regards as having been ethically produced. As with gender, it is something we are born into yet form and renegotiate with every doing. That makes it relevant to look at the specific behaviors de Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier recommend.

The aim of this section is to offer observations on what animalism might look like. As with gender, there exists a very large range of theories and prescriptions of what gender can, may, should and, most of all, *should not* look like. In theory. In practice, gender takes on as many forms as there are individuals and this is the same with animalism. Therefore, a description of the recommended ways of doing animalism can offer insight into how insight into what alternative performative might look like. This is necessary to understand the ongoing transition.

4.4 Limitations

The methodology I have chosen for this research offers valuable tools for the analysis of discourse and gives a relatively extensive overview of the ways language is used to challenge, subvert and strengthen speciesism by de Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier. The scope of this master's thesis is limited, and it is impossible to cover a great number of factors and do an in-depth analysis of each of them. Because this academic field is rather new and much remains unexplored, I decided to investigate several angles. Each of these warrants more thorough examination in future research. I have selected a few aspects to spend special attention to in this thesis and used this methodology section to justify these decisions. I hope that this research will give readers a basic understanding of the many ways in which language can challenge, subvert or strengthen speciesism while providing future scholars with ample ideas for additional research.

As becomes clear from the theoretical framework, language is by no means neutral. Yet, I need to use language in order to write this thesis. I decided to avoid using language that, according to animalist scholars, should be considered speciesist. Readers may experience the more animalist language I use instead as highly ideologically charged. It is important to realise that conventional, speciesist language is just as ideologically charged, and the fact that it seems less so is likely due to familiarisation and the hegemonic dominance of speciesism. I further explain these decisions in Appendix A.

5. Findings

The analysis of the texts on the website of de Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier is divided into six sections. The first section explores each organisation's vision on the transition to a more animalist world. The second section gives an impression of the level of respectful representation and the third one deals with the use of euphemisms. The fourth section is dedicated to neoliberal biases. In the fifth section, I will examine what performing animalism looks like according to the websites of the two organisations. As discussed in the theoretical framework, scholars highlight the importance of childhood indoctrination for speciesism. Therefore, the sixth and final section is dedicated to the texts aimed at young people to help them with essays and presentations.

The same order of reporting will be kept throughout each section. Findings of the Vegetarische Slager will be given first, followed by the ones of Wakker Dier followed by a comparison of the two and a summary of the findings within the theme. For clarity's sake, every section closes by linking the findings to the research question of how language is used to resist speciesism. Hopefully this increases the readability and therefore the coherence and comprehensibility and scrutability of the analysis put forth.

5.1 *Vision, Harms, Solution and Mechanism*

De Vegetarische Slager identifies its vision as a world in which carnists can go without meat without missing out on anything. *'Their big ideal is to have meat lovers experience that they do not have to miss out if they leave off meat for one or more days. The ambition is to become the largest butcher in the world in the short-term.'* Furthermore, they want to *'render animals superfluous in food production chains'*. They compare this to the replacement of mechanic machines that have taken over the work of horses pulling the plough.

The harms identified by the Vegetarische Slager are formulated as the damage to *'efficiency, nature, environment, climate, biodiversity and the world food supply, but naturally also animal welfare'*. In the following paragraphs, they focus primarily on the negative effects meat production has in terms of methane and nitrous oxide, manure surplus and air pollution. The direct harm to non-humans living in factory farming conditions is absent except for the *'naturally animal welfare'*.

The solution offered by de Vegetarische Slager are the replacement of protein gained from non-human flesh by lupine-based proteins. At the same time they report that there is still work that needs to be done in the development of both soja and lupine crops for them to yield the gains necessary to become a equivalent of non-human derived protein. In the meantime, they offer their own products which still contain mothers milk taken from cows and eggs taken from chickens.

The mechanism identified by the Vegetarische slager is a replacement of animal derived protein by lupine derived as is mentioned above. They aim to combine the nutritional value of this product with gastronomic discoveries that render viable alternatives to 'meat' in terms of structure, flavor and nutritional value. According to de Vegetarische Slager, this

alternative will become such an improvement in terms of cost-efficiency both in euros and ecological footprint that it will *'free animals from the food chain process'* altogether.

The vision of Wakker Dier is an *'animal worthy life for all animals in livestock farming'*. They specify this goal by stating that *'In 2013, Dutch meat consumption will have decreased by a quarter and always has the 1 Better Life star.'* The focus of Wakker Dier is thereby not to radically change the current system or to abolition of non-humans as food altogether but to opt for a gradual change.

The harms identified by *Wakker Dier* are the lives lived by those later turned into 'meat'. *'(they lived)...a life in a world of concrete and metal with barely any space or daylight. Many animals do not make it to the finish line but prematurely die a slow and painful death.'* Other parts of the website indicate other concerns of Wakker Dier. For example *'factory farms'*, *'farm fires'*, *'Animal diseases'*, *'Cattle Transport'*, *'Slaughter'* and *'Heat Stress'*. Further explanations of these terms are offered to show the direct reduction of welfare of non-humans by these practices.

The solution and mechanism offered by *Wakker Dier* are absent. Although they speak of reducing meat consumption in the Netherlands by 2030, they do not provide an overall long-term goal. Nor do they offer any more concrete illustrations of how their goal of a 'animal worthy' food chain would look like.

The mechanisms to achieve this are *'speaking out to companies'*, *'creating awareness'*, *'education'* and *'influencing lawmaking'*. A further section of the website illustrates the *do's and don'ts*. In this section, Wakker Dier claims that they strive to *'give defenseless animals a voice with the broad audience'*, *'look for controversial communication'*, *'aim at national publicity'*, *'work professionally and goal-oriented'*, *'work with a highly motivated and well trained team'* and some other characteristics. They also specify that they do *not* *'have knowledge of all animals, only the ones in the cattle industry'*, *'do not save individual animals'*, *'do not focus on other countries'* and other strategies.

What we can gather from these summaries is that there are vast differences between *de Vegetarische Slager* and *Wakker Dier*. First of all, *de Vegetarische slager* wants to completely abolish the exploitation and use of non-humans for human consumption whereas *Wakker Dier* accepts this use as long as it is 'animal worthy'. *De Vegetarische slager* wants to create alternatives that eradicate the necessity of non-humans whereas the *Wakker Dier* seems to accept changes in farming practices as enough to justify using non-humans. The

mechanisms of both organisations differ from actively researching and producing alternatives to criticizing and calling out ‘wrong’ behavior.

By taking these different standpoints and adapting the strategies that they do, each organisation follows one of the two major parties in contemporary Animal Welfare debates. De Vegetarische Slager falls in step with the abolitionist view that rallies around the central premise that humans have no morally justifiable claim of ownership and use of non-humans. Wakker Dier appears to embody the transitionalist view that argues for a gradual change towards a more egalitarian relation based on equal consideration of interests.

Because of their apparent identification with these schools of thought, a nexus of knowledge production is created through reflection and combination. This means that two highly active organisations outside academia offer examples of what the application of academic knowledge might look like. Furthermore, they offer examples of how different goals and world-views can shape the use of language. The central question of this thesis focuses on the use of language by both organisations. Therefore, the notion that both organisations differ greatly at almost all levels except the overall goal of increasing non-human welfare makes it a highly relevant analysis for Critical Animal Studies to engage with real-world practice. It can both offer insight into the applicability of theory as well as offer new sources of research and theorization.

5.2 Respectful Representation

Now that the organisations have been described in terms of self proclaimed identity, I want to engage with them on a deeper level. In this section, I will talk about the extent to which both organisations meet the criteria of respectful representation provided by Freeman and Mershkin. This is a crucial element of the linguistic strategies because it can actively increase or decrease the perception of individuality, worth, actorship and personhood of non-humans. When it comes to the role of language in promoting animalism or challenging speciesism, respectful representation can provide the foundation of acknowledging equality through language. It is important to emphasise that this is not a critique of the conscious application of the guidelines. Rather, the guidelines are used as an analytical tool to investigate the way in which both organizations represent the individuals and interests they claim to represent.

De Vegetarische Slager has a partially respectful representation of non-humans. They succeed at respectful representation according to the guidelines because they acknowledge

the interest non-humans have in not being raised and murdered. However, these descriptions are highly limited. De Vegetarische Slager dedicates a much larger portion of their texts to the environmental and production aspects than to non-human welfare. They do mention 'suffering' and 'free them from the food production process' but this is about all they do. They do not discuss the interests or alternatives.

De Vegetarische Slager fulfills the recommendations of respectful representations on hardly any of the other criteria. There are no pictures of real animals or their living conditions on the website. Nor are their emotional lives, interactions between humans and non-humans or exploitation mentioned anywhere. To put it quite simply, de Vegetarische Slager talks about their product and the benefits they claim it has. The non-humans that are affected as a possible consequence are hardly represented at all. This is not respectful representation at all, quite possibly because there is no representation to be respectful.

How different this is at Wakker Dier. Relatively large sections of their website are dedicated entirely to the experience of non-humans in factory farms. They actively seek to contrast the monetary gains for humans with the massive suffering of non-humans. Extensive numbers and other statistics are provided to illustrate the number of individuals suffering as well as the way in which they suffer. Pigs, cows, chickens and other species have special pages that show how their needs are not getting met in contemporary farming facilities. All of this is illustrated richly with pictures that depict the suffering and alternatives. Yet there are some highly problematic ways in which non-humans are represented. These ways will be discussed in the euphemism section below.

For now I want to reflect on the difference between the two organisations. *De Vegetarische Slager* has almost no representation of non-humans whatsoever. One reason for this might be that they want to focus on their product. Another might be that they do not want to represent their organisation as too idealistic. Leaving the non-humans primarily backgrounded whilst promoting the human and environmental interests places them in the accepted rhetoric of sustainability.

The greenwashing of animal welfare is a phenomena that is widely reported and seems to be the case with de Vegetarische Slager as well. When describing their identity and motives, they readily talk about wanting to reduce non-human suffering. Yet when it comes to the representation of these non-humans they are left out almost completely. A logical conclusion might therefore be that they want to target a broad range of readers. All of these

readers are potential customers with different motivations and considerations. A desire not to deter them with emotionally laden pictures and texts would avoid their choice to mention non-humans whilst also pointing to other beneficiaries.

At the same time, it makes sense that Wakker Dier is doing the opposite. They do not have a concrete product to sell like de Vegetarische Slager does. They make the explicit claim that they want to change the current industry to alleviate non-human suffering. So they show the misery and approach it from the perspective of the suffering non-humans. They are trying, as they put it, to ‘*wake people up*’. Increasing the possibility of empathetic connection through respectful representation is one way of bringing this about.

5.3 Euphemisms

Euphemisms distort reality. They lessen the perceived severity of events, situations and experiences. In the case of non-humans, their use trivializes the suffering of non-humans living under domination structures. In this section, I will be looking at euphemisms used by de Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier. Accurate descriptions will be mentioned as well. So will dysphemisms. The goal is to offer an insight into the way both organisations either proliferate the euphemisms widely concocted by speciesist actors or opt for alternatives.

Meat. Yes, we are going to talk about it. De Vegetarische Slager frequently uses the word meat and variations of it. Interestingly, they also introduce slight variations of terms. For example *vleesch* for *vlees* or *kipstuckjes* for *kipstukjes*. This sounds very much the same yet it signifies the animal free equivalent of the ‘original’. This way, de Vegetarische Slager does not fundamentally challenge the euphemism ‘meat’. They do however shape a second discourse based on the hegemonic one.

Another word frequently used in both the mission statements and identity claims is ‘beef’ and ‘cow’ instead of cow. Many other words such as ‘slaughtered’ are being used with a sense of humor. For example in the sentence ‘Here, only stubborn beliefs are slaughtered’. This echoes the image seen most on the website of the company’s founder holding a bunch of carrots in a traditional butchers outfit and holding a butchers knife, having ‘butchered’ the carrots. This is a direct challenge to hegemonic schemas that are used to the idea of blood instead of carrot juice.

This is about all there is to say about the euphemisms used by de Vegetarische Slager. As is to be expected when they avoid the non-human animals in their texts, euphemisms are

sparse. This is in itself a worthwhile finding because it indicates an alternative way of subverting euphemisms. Instead of arguing against them or offering a plethora of alternatives, they simply attempt to make the euphemisms redundant. This will be reflected on in the conclusion section later on.

Wakker Dier makes extensive use of speciesist euphemisms. A text that is written to share information about factory farming challenges it at the level of content whilst linguistically strengthening speciesist praxis. Such words are ‘meat’, ‘slaughtered’, ‘cattle-industry’, ‘stables’ and ‘*culling*’ instead of flesh, murdered or killed, exploitation of non-humans, factory farms and mass murder.

At the same time, Wakker Dier actively introduces alternatives. They talk about ‘*burning the tails of piglets*’ instead of ‘docking’. They use the phrase ‘*motherly care for newborn animals*’. This acknowledges family ties. It acknowledges care as a need.

One of the most interesting parts of the euphemisms used by Wakker Dier is ‘chicken’. One of the major campaigns of Wakker Dier is aimed at the so-called ‘plofkip’, a genetically engineered type of chicken designed and raised to become as large as possible in the least amount of time. As a result, their muscles cannot support their body weight with all the logical consequences such as muscle tears, bone fractures and the inability to walk in order to reach food and water.

Wakker Dier uses the term ‘chicken’ and ‘plofkip’ to indicate both the individual and the flesh of this individual after it’s death. Not so much a euphemism as a dysphemism, it is a great distortion of conceptualization nonetheless. This is a clear example of the separate discourses to think of the living creature and the ‘meat’. Because Wakker Dier uses them both albeit to indicate different things, they proliferate the use of the separate discourses.

Both organisations use the term ‘animals’ without explaining who are included or excluded. This places the burden of analysis and understanding with the reader. Readers that do not regard humans as animals are not challenged in their view. Readers that regard both humans and chickens, cows and pigs as animals are also not challenged. Therefore, because both organisations do not explicitly specify who are included when they talk about ‘animals’, they neither strengthen or challenge speciesist and animalist discourse. Rather, they allow for the reader to use their own existing knowledge to shape the meaning of their texts.

A comparison between the two organisations shows that de Vegetarische Slager steers away from any terms indicating non-humans or their living conditions. This is a stark contrast

to Wakker Dier that uses a mixture of euphemisms, dysphemisms and some considered neutral by Critical Animal Scholars. As we have seen before, *de Vegetarische Slager* appears to focus the reader's attention primarily on their alternative. Wakker Dier attempts to stimulate awareness yet proliferates some of the separate discourses that distance the living individual from 'meat' as well.

5.4 Neoliberal Capitalist Biases

Neoliberal capitalist biases entail a broad range of ideological value systems. As is explained earlier, it is easiest to contrast these with animalistic systems of valuing. For example the metric in which the lives of non-human individuals are measured in. This can be a utilitarian cost-benefit analysis from a purely economical metric in the capitalist perspective. It can also be the extent in which preferences, capabilities and emotions are being fulfilled or thwarted in the animalistic view. This is a central clash between specialist and animalistic thought.

De Vegetarische Slager is a business venture. They have a product to sell and are deeply embedded in the capitalist system. They focus primarily on the promotion of their products and provide developments of this product. As is stated before, they aim to liberate animals from systems of food production. There is however no mention of the effect this might have for individuals suffering in these systems. Instead, there is ample reporting of large-scale effects to the environment. This appears to be a perfect illustration of how capitalist values drive out other values. In order for *de Vegetarische Slager* to sell their product, they have to adapt anthropocentric rhetoric that focuses on the effects for 'meat-eaters' and 'their planet'.

What is missing from these descriptions is the suffering of individual non-humans. The closest *de Vegetarische Slager* gets to this are statements in the personal motivation. Here, the owner says he was moved when his father stored '*ten thousands of bodies*' and he later on got sad when '*the cattle had to go to slaughter*'. This does two things. First, it reduces the experience of the individual cows to a group-level experience that is then left out. Second, it places the emphasis on the company's owner and what the dead bodies and murder of the cows did to *him*.

This anthropocentric evaluation of events is an example of the neoliberal bias although not as biased as seen in mainstream speciesist media. Nonetheless it is a bias because it instrumentalizes the suffering of ten thousand individuals without restoring their

individual dignity. The owner frames this event from the anthropocentric perspective of his own experience. He does not describe the recognition of personhood and emotions that accompanied this upheaval. Therefore, it is slightly biased and at the same time does offer a possible consequence of empathizing albeit implicit. The dead bodies were no longer meat or a means of profit for the owner. Yet this normative denominator or the restoration of the absent referent and the violence does not take place making it an ambiguous representation.

Wakker Dier actively incorporates the neoliberal capitalist rhetoric in their arguments against it. For example by stating that *'An animal is not a lifeless product. But food producers think different. In this sector animals serve one purpose: making profit'*. This frames the food industry in a way that Wakker Dier wants. They directly name the capitalist system of valuing. Later on, they use this frame to offer their own counter-frame. *'But the production of meat, eggs and milk that is as big and cheap as possible causes immense animal suffering. Of the animals that cross the supermarket counter we know one thing. Practically all of them have had a miserable life'*. Note again that it are animals who are going over the counter, not meat.

Wakker Dier goes on to explain the suffering on a general level. They primarily focus on the circumstances and argue that it is those that cause the animals to suffer. This can be linked back to their goal of change within the system instead of abolishing the system. It is in this way that the clash between their narrative and the capitalist one can be understood. Focusing on the suffering competes with monetary gain as a metric. Wakker Dier clearly tries to argue that the monetary profit for humans, both consumers and producers, is paid for by the non-humans.

At the same time, as an alternative they claim that *'We want less and better meat as the solution for large scale animal suffering'*. As with the Vegetarische Slager, the term 'better meat' is highly ambiguous. It can either refer to the quality in terms of taste and texture, price, suffering required to get it or a combination of those factors. Their claim that they want less meat does not necessarily mean that conditions will change. It might be a consequence but the way they state it on their website does nothing to introduce compassionate evaluation. Nor do they argue from the position of the individual animal. Instead, they counter the neoliberal capitalist logic with generalized claims of structures causing suffering.

Neither of the organisations argues from the perspective of the individual animal. Nor do they talk about the difference their ideal situation would make for them. Instead, *de Vegetarische Slager* fully embraces market logic and tries to offer an alternative product. *Wakker Dier* criticizes the current systems of production yet seems to aim for minor changes within those systems to make them acceptable. Therefore, both organisations appear to be motivated by compassion yet accept neoliberal capitalist logic mechanisms of change and production.

5.5 *Performing Animalism*

The fifth theme is performing animalism. Because of the deeply ingrained speciesist scripts govern the behavior of most humans, a clear prescription of an animalistic alternative as means to destabilize and renegotiate relating to non-humans can be highly effective. It is therefore highly relevant to see how both organizations offer ways of doing animalism. That is why this theme focuses on suggestions and information offering animalistic alternative performances.

De Vegetarische Slager offers a way of doing animalism that should not surprise the attentive reader: to buy their products. More interestingly is that they make a distinction between veganism and vegetarianism and opt for the vegan one. This is in line with their general goal of rendering non-humans obsolete in food production systems. They offer four specific ways of supporting this. The first is to buy their products in supermarkets. The second is to visit their restaurant in Amsterdam and the third is to fund their factory. A final way of doing animalism is to use the recipes they offer at their website.

There is a discrepancy between the goal and the strategy. *De Vegetarische Slager* claims that they want to ‘liberate animals from systems of food production’. Yet some of the products they sell are vegetarian, not vegan. (They are called *de Vegetarische Slager* (*‘Vegetarian Butcher’*), not *de Veganistische Slager* (*‘Vegan Butcher’*)). This means that they still require a large number of non-humans to produce milk and eggs. The non-humans in these systems of production suffer equally and are tortured and murdered in the same places as those raised for meat. Therefore, the suggested behavior of buying their products stimulates more individuals to be kept for their eggs and mother-milk instead of meat. *De Vegetarische Slager* cannot meet its goal of making non-humans obsolete through this strategy.

Wakker Dier appears to have the same schism. They offer readers ways of doing ‘*animal friendly groceries*’. These ways consist of buying vegetarian products, the ones with the ‘better life stars’ and other characteristics. For example eggs from ‘*free range chickens*’ and milk from ‘*meadow cows*’. They offer advice on how to recognize misleading marketing and what labels consumers want to look for if they want to buy ‘*animal friendly*’. Buying vegetarian instead of flesh containing products is the same fallacy as de Vegetarische Slager promotes. It only changes the content of the food for the human but does very little for the non-human.

Wakker Dier also has a page dedicated to those that want to eat vegetarian meals one day of the week. Vegetarian, not vegan. One day, not seven. They offer information based on a person that follows a fully vegetarian diet such as ‘*You save 900 animals that you do not eat*’, ‘*You live healthier*’ and ‘*Eating vegetarian is more and more delicious*’. In short, they offer away for carnists to gradually transition to a vegetarian diet. And like de Vegetarische Slager, they offer recipes. These, interestingly enough, are vegan although they are labeled vegetarian.

To summarize these findings, doing animalism is by no means straightforward. Both organisations recommend dietary changes, yet these do not seem to have the desired effect. Perhaps in the case of de Vegetarische Slager if their aim is to sell products. The way in which adapting a vegetarian instead of an omnivorous diet helps non-humans in contemporary systems of production is not quite clear. This indicates a clear division between the theoretical approaches to doing animalism and the promoted strategies by non-academic organisations. Further discussion on these findings including nuances and possible strategic considerations will be offered in the conclusion section below.

5.6 Essays and Presentations

The aim of this section is to analyze the information offered by both organisations to young people working on a school project. Both specify this as writing an essay or doing a presentation. As was explained in the theoretical section, the ideological indoctrination during these formative years is vital for a thorough speciesistic or alternative structuring of an individual's perception. Fostering critical faculties and dissent can stimulate degrees of resistance. Schools are an institution that can stimulate critical thinking as well as offer an opportunity for students to share their beliefs. Ideally, schools are an environment where

dominant discourse can be questioned. This is not the case in most situations. Yet information about animalism can stimulate discussion and resistance. This makes it especially worthwhile to examine the information provided to individuals during their formative years. This section will provide the result of this examination.

De Vegetarische Slager offers a summary of the information given on its website. This means the story of how the company was founded. They discuss the idea of ‘*meat without animals*’ and the benefits for the environment. Most space is assigned to the ingredients and the names of their products. In contrast, only two sentences are granted to non-humans. These sentences are:

‘In 1997 something happened that had large consequences: swine flu broke out and in 13 months more than 12 million pigs were killed. As a farmer that cultivated vegetables and herbs, Jaap got asked if remains could be stored in his refrigerator. The destruction companies could not process the huge amount of dead piglets.’

This is similar to their website. Both show an absence of non-human animals and their living conditions. Instead, de Vegetarische slager shares information about the quality of their products and the experience they have with people tasting them. For example by stating that: ‘*The audience of a television show was asked to try our new eel salad. They didn’t realize it was mock eel*’.

Another important find is that de Vegetarische Slager actively constructs itself with the traditional views of butchers. They call themselves *traditional butchers performing old craftsmanship*. In short, they combine claims of sustainability whilst arguing to be or become a better alternative to contemporary ‘meat’. In the context of information for essays and presentations, this becomes an interesting strategy that will be discussed in the conclusion section below.

A final finding of this material is that it too perpetuates the failure to use different words for the living animal and its flesh. De Vegetarische Slager uses the word ‘*chicken*’ instead of ‘*chicken flesh*’ or their alternative. Instead, they offer statements such as ‘*We have a chicken machine that produces 1.000.000 kg plant-based chicken*’. This is a complex sentence for it both reinforces as well as challenges the use of ‘chicken’ as an indicator.

Wakker Dier offers a list of subjects for young people. These subjects range from cows, pigs and other non-humans to non-human diseases, factory farms and factory farm fires. Each subject offers a number of statistics and descriptions of the conditions. In line with

the recommendations discussed earlier, they describe each situation from the experience of the cow, the chicken or other non-human subject. For example with sentences about young cows enslaved to become ‘veal’, most of which are male: *‘His first weeks he spends totally alone. After a few weeks he goes to four to eight other calves in a small box. There he has 1.8 square meter to itself. The floor of the box is often hard and barren. And the door? Always closed.’*

After every page of information, the alternatives aimed at by Wakker Dier are given. Now these conditions are very much in line with their general strategy. They clearly state that they want different treatment and living conditions to be achieved through the system, not a different system altogether. In the case of the young cows kept for ‘veal’ are *‘Mother care for all calfs. A lot of straw, lots of space and grass. No international cattle transport’*.

Wakker Dier offers interesting examples of performing animalism as well. Young people are encouraged to write a piece for their school magazine or magazine of their sports club. They are encouraged to spend their pocket money on vegetarian products like vegetarian ‘krotet’ or ‘kaassoufflé’ instead of hamburgers. As on the rest on the website, they promote vegetarianism instead of veganism.

A major difference between de Vegetarische Slager and Wakker Dier is the way the information is offered. De Vegetarische Slager offers a more neutral tone that is similar to the information provided on their website. Wakker Dier on the other hand adapts language that is clearly framed at young people. For example by stating that *‘The tails of young piglets are burned off. Without anesthesia! Terrible, right?’* In the case of Wakker Dier, they actively stimulate emotional evaluation whereas de Vegetarische Slager leaves this up to the reader.

In general, the findings about the texts aimed at young people reflect the findings about the rest of the websites. De Vegetarische Slager offers information on itself and it’s products whereas Wakker Dier offers young people information about contemporary living conditions and practices at factory farms. When it comes to taking action, de Vegetarische Slager informs about how their product offers an alternative to ‘meat’ without the motivation from the non-human’s perspective. Wakker Dier does offer this perspective but does not offer steps to act on this knowledge except sharing it and changing consumption from non-human flesh to vegetarian products.

6. Conclusion

In the introduction, I stated that current developments could optimistically be understood as a beginning transition from a speciesist world to an animalist one. Animalist scholars have found that complex meaning making processes underlie the hegemonic speciesist ideology. In reaction to this realisation, an animalist counter discourse is being developed. Speciesism and animalism are engaged in a constant struggle that shapes the relationship between humans and other animals. Different perspectives stimulate ways of evaluating the needs and value of non-humans. The result of these evaluations determines what acts are acceptable and which are to be avoided. More specifically, the large scale exploitation of non-humans for food purposes is a legitimate practice when seen through a speciesist lens while it is unacceptable through animalist eyes.

Both discourses offer their own logic and reasons for thinking the way they do. The dominant speciesist rhetoric is based on the neo-liberal capitalist valuing that weighs the economic and gastronomic profits from an strictly rational anthropocentric perspective. Animalistic rhetoric is based on an empathic understanding that factors in the experience of the non-humans as large indicator of the desirability.

Both *de Vegetarische Slager* and *Wakker Dier* explicitly state that the suffering of non-humans is their main concern about contemporary food production systems. This establishes them within the animalistic discourse, or, put differently, outside the dominant hegemonic speciesist system. How both organizations describe their position within these counter-narratives differs greatly. *De Vegetarische Slager* attempts to render the use of non-humans obsolete in food production systems whilst not actively engaging with the discursive formations that legitimize the systems themselves. *Wakker Dier* wants to reform current systems and stimulate awareness of the capitalist systems that reduce non-humans to consumables.

In my conclusion I will link my findings to the overarching discourses. I will analyse how the texts of each system interact with the schemata justifying speciesism. I will then examine the alternatives they offer. Finally, I will position each organisation in relation to the dominant neoliberal capitalist ideology. Feminist scholars have always rejected the exploitative nature of this ideology. Systemic change is needed to create a world that is truly just. The interconnectedness of speciesism and neoliberal capitalism needs to be recognised by those seeking change.

In the last section of this conclusion, I will reflect on the limitations of this research and provide suggestions for further research. Because the findings about the texts aimed at young people fall in line with the findings about the texts aimed at adults, I decided to integrate them rather than to spend a separate section on them.

6.1 Challenging Old Schemata: Resisting Speciesism

Considering that both *de Vegetarische Slager* and *Wakker Dier* aim to fight the exploitation of non-humans used for the production of food, it should come as no surprise that both reject current speciesist practices. *Wakker Dier* devotes a large part of its website to criticism of the way non-humans are treated. *De Vegetarische Slager* spends far less texts denouncing speciesist practices. It mainly focuses on the benefits of its own products. Yet, this can also be regarded as a major challenge to an important speciesist schemata. According to Melanie Joy, the exploitation of non-humans for food is often justified by presenting it as normal, natural and necessary. By creating a very similar product in terms of nutritional value and eating experience, *de Vegetarische Slager* aims to render non-human exploitation obsolete in the food production process. As such, they invalidate the ‘necessary’ part of the normal, natural and necessary-schemata.

This schematic shift is emphasised by their choice of words and their use of euphemisms. Animalism strives towards respectful representation. This means that the interests and experiences of non-humans are both valued and reported from their perspective. This is the complete opposite of speciesistic representation that tries to ignore, leave out or hide the subjective experience of non-humans in food production processes. When the same word is used for a living non-human and the flesh of a murdered one, one can remain unconscious of the violence required to change the first into the latter. Therefore, it plays into speciesist discourse. In this specific case, however, the use of words that are very similar to words used to describe non-humans and their flesh has an opposite effect. It highlights the similarity between the products of *de Vegetarische Slager* and non-human flesh, disproving the necessity of exploitation.

The use of euphemisms by *Wakker Dier* also shows a shift towards a more animalist discourse. The organisation sometimes uses euphemisms that are considered to speciesist, but at other times, it uses more neutral or animalist terms reflecting the violence in common treatment of non-humans. The website generally shows a high level of respectful

representation according to the guidelines provided by Freeman and Mershkin. *De Vegetarische Slager* leaves out the experience of non-humans altogether. Instead, they give oodles of text and space to the human interests and experience of eating. However, the little representation that is present is considered respectful. This seems to reflect a discursive shift away from speciesism.

6.2 *Forming New Schemata: The Performance of Animalism*

Authoritative organizations like *de Vegetarische Slager* and *Wakker Dier* offer scripts to perform animalism. This means that they are seen as knowledgeable actors that can offer behavior in line with their regime of truth. One of the goals of this thesis is to assess the alternative to speciesism offered by the organisations. What schemata are being formed about what constitutes acceptable behavior? Animalist scholars propose veganism as an acceptable alternative to speciesist eating habits. *De Vegetarische Slager* and *Wakker Dier* do not deviate as far from the speciesist norm as academic theory prescribes.

Neither organisation offers a plant-based lifestyle as appropriate doing. Instead, they carefully nudge readers towards vegetarian lifestyles. For *de Vegetarische Slager*, the recommended behavior is to substitute their products for the flesh of non-humans. This seems a major transition towards animalist practice, but it is important to keep in mind that not all of their products are vegan. Some are merely vegetarian and their production still requires the use of mothers milk taken from cows and eggs taken from chickens. This weakens *de Vegetarische Slager*'s challenge to the necessity of exploitation.

Apparently, exploitation is still necessary, and therefore acceptable, for the production of these specific products. This implies that the acceptability of exploitation is to be judged by gastronomical preferences and the requirements of our production processes rather than by the inherent value of the wellbeing of non-humans. This is far from equal consideration of human and non-human needs. Moreover, the fact that an organisation that specifically aims to render the exploitation of non-humans obsolete has not managed to do so for the use of eggs taken from chickens and mothers milk taken from cows implies that for these products, exploitation remains necessary and acceptable. As such, the organisation partially challenges and partially strengthens the schemata saying that the exploitation of animals is necessary.

Wakker Dier, too, recommends behavior that is considered speciesist by scholars. By proposing to eat a vegetarian meal once a week, the organisation implicitly approves of

eating the flesh of non-humans. They explicitly recommend young people and adults to buy products that are made of eggs taken from chickens and mothers milk taken from cows. As such, the change in schemata is not radical. Exploitation of non-humans is understood to be acceptable if their circumstances are slightly improved. Consuming their eggs and mother's milk constitutes acceptable behavior, consuming their flesh is acceptable if limited to six days a week. This is in accordance with the goals of the organisation, which are to gradually change the system to improve the situation of non-humans rather than to liberate them from speciesist exploitation altogether.

Both organizations recognize the tremendous amount of suffering required to make 'meat' and strive towards a large reduction of the consumption of flesh. They also claim to desire an overall lessening of exploitation of non-humans for food reasons. Yet the behaviors they ask from their readers do not help to reach this goal. Exploiting non-humans for their mothers milk and eggs instead of their flesh is incommensurable with the central claims of Critical Animal Studies. Instead, they promote a lifestyle that is completely plant-based. Going from an omnivorous diet to a vegan one might be too much to ask from most readers. Even within vegetarian communities, vegans are seen as extremist though logically consequent. This offers a stimulant of further discussion by comparing theoretical and ideological desires with realistic aims and ways of achieving them.

6.3 Structural Change: Attitude Towards Neoliberal Capitalism

De Vegetarische Slager is a commercial organisation that attempts to change the system from within. Its goal is to liberate non-humans from exploitative food production processes rather than to maximise profits. Nevertheless, it is dependent on the sale of its products for its continued existence. This is reflected by the fact that the texts on its website are mostly devoted to the benefits of its products. It needs to attract customers, and its aim to convince meat eaters to try its products has implications for its language. The need to appeal to an audience that is deeply influenced by the speciesist hegemony may well be the reason de Vegetarische Slager focuses on environmental benefits of their products instead of on non-humans. A organisation that is part of the neoliberal capitalist system may be able to change things *within* the system, but it is unlikely to radically challenge it.

Wakker Dier is a non-profit organisation, and as such has more liberty to defy the neoliberal capitalist system. It explicitly challenges neoliberal value systems by contrasting

them with the suffering they cause. But while it strongly rejects the system on an explicit level, the implicit message it sends is far less radical. The organisation proposes small changes in consumer behavior. Wakker Dier recommends readers to buy certified versions of the products that they would usually buy and to choose vegetarian alternatives. It makes use of the capitalist system of consumption, supply and demand to enforce minor changes within the system. Instead of resisting to neoliberal capitalism, it encourages slight changes in the consumers' assessments. Wakker Dier asks them to give some weight to the well-being of non-humans, so this becomes a factor. By altering demand, it hopes to alter supply and to improve the situation of non-humans used in the production process. In short, Wakker Dier also acts within the system instead of radically challenging it.

6.4 Limitations and Suggestions For Further Research

Like any other researcher's, my point of view is heavily shaped by my own frame of reference. While this affects any kind of research, my choice to use critical discourse analysis further amplifies this as the unpacking of implicit meanings forms an important part of the analysis. It would therefore be very interesting and informative to have a researcher with a different background and a different frame of reference repeat this research. Even another researcher, however, would probably be human and therefore to the experiences of a human. This research focuses on the lives and representation of non-humans and the human-ness of the researcher is a severe yet unsurmountable limitation.

The limited scope of this research in terms of both time and words has forced me to make some difficult decisions about inclusion. I aimed to give as representative an overview of the texts of the two organisations as possible while maintaining some depth. Further research should incorporate the texts of more organisations to see if these organisations are indeed representative of Dutch organisations resisting to speciesism. Despite the fact that I only included two websites in my research, I still had to leave out many interesting parts. Further research could look at visual images and at the news sections of the websites.

Inclusivity was lacking even more when it comes to the intersectionality of my approach. As mentioned, I tried to give a representative and in-depth account of the language used by Wakker Dier and de Vegetarische Slager. In order to achieve this within the limited time and words available, I had to leave the factors of sexism and classism out of account. A more intersectionalist approach would for example have included considerations of the

feasibility of following the recommendations for disadvantaged groups. Such an approach could shed a light on the interconnectedness of various forms of exploitation and suppression within the neoliberal capitalist system.

While most scholars emphasize the need for young individuals to have knowledge of factory farming, they do not offer ways in which this can be provided. The information offered by the two organizations can be regarded as a response to the critique of the imbalance between specialist and animalist propaganda. So far, no examination of alternative literature for children and teens has been done. Although this analysis can offer insight into the way counter discursive information can be provided to young people, it is by no means extensive. Further research should combine pedagogical insights with critical animal studies perspectives to determine how young people are to be approached.

6.5 Closing Remarks

In this thesis, I answered the question ‘How do *de Vegetarische Slager* and *Wakker Dier* use language to challenge, subvert and strengthen speciesism?’ My research has reached an ambiguous conclusion. The complexity of my findings matches that of the meaning making processes I studied. *De Vegetarische Slager* and *Wakker Dier* both resist the currently dominant speciesist practices, but recommend behavior that is considered speciesist by critical animal scholars. They argue against and challenge certain forms of exploitation without condemning the exploitation of non-humans altogether. On the one hand, they take steps towards a more animalist discourse with their choice of words. *Wakker Dier* fulfills most of the criteria for respectful representation. On the other hand, their recommendations lead to the formation of schemata about what constitutes acceptable behavior that do not align with the conclusions of recent scholarship.

Organisations function as a bridge between academia and society at large. When the gap between these is very large, as is the case here, it may be necessary to adjust the message as not to deter people. Decades of neoliberal capitalist and speciesist hegemony have profoundly shaped dominant worldviews. My findings may be the result of strategic considerations on the part of *de Vegetarische Slager* and *Wakker Dier*. If they deemed it necessary to incorporate speciesist elements to appeal to a broad audience, this reveals a lot about the small scope of the supposed ongoing transition. If their texts represent their actual views, academic insights have had even less real-world impact to this point. In any case, the

effects of any supposed transition on the actual lived experiences of non-humans will be rather limited if the resulting schemata still approve of the (slightly altered and reduced) consumption of the flesh, mother's milk and eggs of non-humans. The ongoing transition will need to gain a lot of depth and profoundness, both on a discursive and on a behavioral level, in order to bring about any real equality or justice.

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Appendix A

A note on the language in this thesis. Most words used to describe non-humans and the practices humans perform are highly ideological. That means that they are euphemisms, loaded with anthropocentric bias or contain some other type of distortion. In order to adapt a more neutral vocabulary, I will follow the guidelines offered by Joan Dunayer (2001).

As a doctor and vivisectionist, Dunayer encountered a broad range of words used to reduce empathic evaluation of the experiences non-humans have. It was through language that she regained her ability to care after reading Carol Adams' *The Sexual Politics of Meat* and the works of Peter Singer and Tom Regan. Working at a psychology department of the University of Pennsylvania at the time, she witnessed how she and her colleagues handled rats with great indifference. The rats were starved, shocked with electricity, wounds were inflicted upon them and they were confined to small metal spaces for up to 23 hours a day.

Using words such as 'methods' and 'procedures' reduced the need for moral judgement of these tortures (Dunayer, 2001). Based on ecofeminist literature, Dunayer made a collection of alternatives. Words that are not strongly biased to elicit emotions but stimulate linguistic equality between humans and non-humans. This appendix is an overview of these words and the words they replace.

**Phrase stimulating separate
evaluation schema:**

Agricultural animal, farm animal

Farmed animal, food animal

Animal agriculture, farming

Bacon, ham, pork (etc.)

Beef, hamburger, steak (etc.)

Is replaced by:

enslaved nonhuman, food-industry
captive

animal enslaved for food, animal
exploited for food

food industry enslavement and slaughter,
Food-industry captivity, enslaving non-
Humans for food, exploiting animals for
Food

Pig flesh

Cow flesh

Beef producer, dairy farmer, egg enslaver,	cattle enslaver, cow enslaver, hen
Producer, pork producer, veal farmer (etc.)	pig enslaver, calf enslaver (etc.)
Cull v.	kill, murder
Farm (with enslaved nonhumans) facility,	confinement facility, enslavement enslavement operation
Grow (a nonhuman-animal)	rear for slaughter
Livestock	enslaved nonhuman mammals, captive nonhuman mammals, exploited nonhuman mammals, mammals enslaved for food

And some further recommendations that are also quite useful. I will limit this list to the recommendations of what to use. For a complete list of recommendations both of what to use and avoid, see Dunayer (2001).

Who for any sentient being.

Include all creatures with a nervous system in the term *animal*.

Vivid descriptions of particular nonhumans and their experiences to help readers and listeners visualize their situation and empathize.

Syntax that makes nonhuman animals a sentence's most emphatic position: beginning or end.

Word order that frequently places non humans before humans (nonhuman and human animals; the cat Jessie and her human companion Steve).

Words that keep nonhuman animals in view (*Many pigs died*, not *Mortality was high*; *The trapped fox struggled*, not *Struggling occurred*)