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The Provision of Compassion for Animals: A Filmic Exploration of Industrial Linear Rhythms

Abstract

Compassion is an emotion that may be useful for improving the lives of animals within the intensive and factory farming system (IFFS). Rhythms that exist within this system play a role in making compassion difficult to realise, which formulates the research question: How do the rhythms of the IFFS shape the provision of compassion for animals? Drawing on a cultural mode of analysis informed by Henri Lefebvre's work on rhythms, this paper explored the rhythms of three films that focus on the treatment of animals in this system: *Meat*, *Our Daily Bread* and *Never Let Me Go*. Industrial linear rhythms seem to compromise the provision of compassion for animals in the IFFS by manipulating the cyclical rhythms of animals and animalised bodies from birth, through life and at death. Compassion for animals and animalised bodies in the IFFS, this paper concludes, is often provided in a piecemeal and localised manner. Finally, research strategies are suggested to continue analysing cultural objects that have the potential to create the crisis necessary to explore the limits of industrial linear rhythms.

Key Words: Animals; compassion; film; rhythms; Henri Lefebvre

Compassion is an unstable emotion. It needs to be translated into action, or it withers. The question is what to do with the feelings that have been aroused, the knowledge that has been communicated. If one feels that there is nothing "we" can do – but who is that "we"? – and nothing "they" can do either – and who are "they"? – then one starts to get bored, cynical, apathetic.

Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 2003, p. 101

Introduction

One may be moved for some suffering beings, but as they cannot change the situation for these beings, they let the emotion fade to be replaced with another. Compassion is indeed one of those emotions that appear to be in a state of flux and can be practiced in somewhat counterintuitive ways. For example, there might be lashings of compassion given to some celebrity undergoing some generally non-life-threatening medical procedure, while a whole population of suffering bodies in a war-torn ravaged land are given less intense sympathetic feeling. Of course, some 'citizens of modernity' would view compassion as a feeling to be avoided and 'will do anything to keep themselves from being moved' (Sontag 2003, 99). Documenting and analysing compassion for suffering bodies, however, is required to reveal the workings of this under-researched emotion in culture and organization. The aim of this paper is to examine the compassion provided to animals within the intensive and factory farming system (IFFS). A population of non-human beings that can be said to have very little "say" in their treatment but subject to an incredible array of organizational practices. We utilise films about the IFFS as cultural objects, examining how the rhythms of these organizational environments, as captured and re-presented in these films, shape the provision of compassion for animals. Rhythms, following the work of Henri Lefebvre, are those repetitive vibrations of life, which hold this socio-material world together. Specifically, we explore how rhythms in the organizational environments of the IFFS shape the compassion provided to animals. Additionally, we consider the perspective of film viewers, exploring what compassionate feelings can arise when viewing such works. The question guiding our analysis and discussion is: How do the rhythms of the IFFS shape the provision of compassion for animals?

In the most general sense, compassion is an emotional response where one is moved or desires to relieve the suffering of another. The ascendance of compassion as legitimate public emotion is attributed to western societies' movement away from priding themselves on killing and torturing others because more and more people became concerned with the pain of others and the desire to stop or minimise it (Sznajder 2001). The rise of sentimentalism (i.e., the ability to find truth through feelings) in eighteenth century philosophy, literature and other arts, provided public space to express compassion for a whole host of "vulnerable bodies" including children, women, slaves and animals (see Cosslett 2006, on the development of compassion in children's literature). Compassion is a social emotion that has then been instrumental in mobilising populations to better treat vulnerable groups and thus may be useful for future management theory and practices that aim to improve animal lives. However, 'it implies a social relation between spectators and sufferers, with the emphasis on the spectator's experience of feeling compassion and its subsequent relation to material practice' (Berlant 2004, 1). Compassion in this article means the wish or want to alleviate the suffering of an animal, which can include preventing their deaths, if one's compassion is aligned with animal rights or welfare discourses that understand animal death by human design as ethically problematic.

Historically, the sites of intensive and factory farming are reported as places where there is much abuse to animals, often resulting in unnecessary deaths (Harrison 1964). In the world today, a significant number of animals find themselves in the IFFS. For example, in 2010, pig and chicken factory farming spread across all the continents besides Africa with 60 per cent of pork and about 70 per cent of chicken meat coming from these operations (Smil 2013, 122). The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that in 2014, there were over 985 million live heads of pigs and over 21 million units (1000 heads per unit) of live chickens in the world (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2017). It is safe to assume that a major proportion of these pig and chickens were/are part of the IFFS.

Recently, Sayers (2016) dedicated an essay to the factory-farmed pig 'because she is subjected to and silenced by so much "organisation"' (371) and within the piece developed strategies to complicate the relations between human and animals in order to challenge the dominance of the masculinist meat-eating culture. Her piece adds to an emerging body of theory and research that recognises animals are indeed part of organizational life. In fact, their presence in various industries can no longer be ignored (Hannah and Robertson 2016) and are part of the world of work (Coulter 2016, Taylor and Hamilton 2013). So far, scholars have opened up discussions on our dependence on animal suffering to produce goods and services (Gaines and Jermier 2000), on problems with an ethics which denies animality (ten Bos 2009) and argue for the recognition of animals as having an inherent worth in organizations rather than be construed as resources (Hamilton and Mitchell 2017). The emerging empirically-orientated studies have set about mapping human-animal organizational relations (Doré and Michalon 2016) in addition to showing the extent to which animals are accommodated by organizations (Sage et al. 2016, O'Doherty 2016) and how populations of animals are regulated (Skoglund and Redmalm 2016, Hillier and Byrne 2016). Overall, this work is assisting in the articulation of the varied and complex presences of animals in organization.

In reviewing this new area of research, Labatut, Munro and Desmond's (2016) observe that scholars have responded to 'a concern for animal ethics, animal agency, and the way in which "biosocial organization" is a fundamental aspect of the development of organizations' (326). Our contribution too grapples with this constellation of concerns by considering the provision

of compassion for animals in organizational contexts that form part of the IFFS. Compassion can be considered part of the application of a more embodied approach to animal ethics, which Pick (2011) calls a *creaturely ethics* that takes the position that living beings, regardless of being human or not, are vulnerable beings prone to violent forces. Pick believes that individuals and societies have an obligation to try and do something to protect these vulnerable beings from violent exposure. However, our work is not intended to be a philosophical exploration of animal ethics. We are largely interested in exploring compassionate practices and emotional responses for animals within the IFFS, as informed by the perspective that animals are vulnerable bodies in Pick's sense of the term. In the review of the organizational literature on the IFFS, workplace culture, factory technologies and design are understood to make compassion provided to animals difficult to realise. In these studies, the work and processes in converting live animals into products are presented as repetitive in nature – it is rhythmic. Yet the power of rhythms is insufficiently explored, along with its implications on how it can influence human emotions towards other vulnerable living beings. There is then potential in focusing on the 'rhythms' within the organizational spaces that make up the IFFS to ask: How do the rhythms of the IFFS shape the provision of compassion for animals?

Henri Lefebvre's (2004) is an important starting point to consider rhythms because his work forces thought on how the whole socio-material world can be conceived as rhythms. His work has made a significant contribution to exploring the presence and implications of rhythms in social spaces. Lefebvre's account of rhythms is wide reaching and is defined as repetitions that happen within a duration of time. They can also be sequenced to be expressed as identifiable patterns, for example, the process of day to night, the coordination of train schedules or a human's body's response to music. He articulates the difficulty of defining what constitutes rhythm because 'it is neither a substance, matter nor a thing' and speculates it is 'perhaps **energy**' for 'an energy is employed, unfolds in time and a space (a space-time)' (65). Rhythm is then an expression of energy that has a variety of effects for it can be a disciplinary force or a way of harmonising things. Lefebvre articulates that rhythms impact upon one's senses and are inexplicitly tied up with what one can feel. Rhythms thus have an ability to shape the emotions people experience. We draw on his approach of rhythmanalysis, that is the analysis of rhythms, to see what kinds of rhythms shape the compassion provided for animals within the IFFS.

It must be highlighted that the IFFS not only refers to the physical assets of the industry, such as infrastructure, labour pool, animals, technology etc. Taking inspiration from Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari 2004/1987, 97-98) this paper also includes those cultural objects that provide insights, commentary, thoughts or responses on the functioning of the IFFS. The central questions are explored through three arthouse films that have a commitment, and this we stress, to cinematic *naturalism* and *realism*, which convey and respond to the workings of the IFFS. Deleuze and Guattari (1994) further articulate that the 'aim of art is to wrest the percept from perceptions of objects and states of the perceiving subject' (167). In effect, as these cultural objects are cinematic artworks, they have the potential to provide a realistic or wider scope of vision of the entire IFFS than a single observer could experience on their own accord.

The analysis of rhythms begins with Frederick Wiseman's 1976 ethnographic documentary *Meat*, which records in graphic detail how animals become meat for human consumption in a processing plant in the United States. Following in a chronological fashion, Nikolaus Geyrhalter's 2006 film, *Unser täglich Brot (Our Daily Bread)*, offers insights into how food, including meat products, are processed and manufactured in early twenty-first century Europe.

Although there are a few brief moments where some concern for the animals are depicted, these films capture the power over animal bodies through what are called industrial linear rhythms, which are explained shortly. Furthermore, these industrial linear rhythms seem to harness the power of cyclical rhythms for organizational ends, the one explored is the manipulation of the cycle of birth, life and death for animals. The final film, Mark Romanek's 2010 dystopian science-fiction film *Never Let Me Go*, based on Kazuo Ishiguro's prize-winning book of the same name, chillingly shows how the industrial linear rhythms of the IFFS become an organizational strategy that controls the lives of certain humans. In sum, these films provide insights into how the industrial linear rhythms of the IFFS seems to create a space where the provision of compassion is infrequent and limited.

Through the analysis of rhythms, this article opens a research route for organizational and management studies scholars to better understand the absence and presence of compassion for animals within the sphere of IFFS. Compassion is found to be understood in a very limited sense so that the malicious and wanton cruelty of previous times is absent, yet animal death is an accepted social fact. It also proposes research strategies that aim to broaden the understanding of the industrial linear rhythms in relations to other rhythms in the IFFS, which could potentially be amplified to challenge the dominance of industrial linear rhythms.

Compassion and Animals in the IFFS

Current research and theories on compassion in organizations are human-centred (Frost 1999, Kanov 2004, Lilius et al. 2011, Rynes et al. 2012) with much empirical research documenting and then theorising how humans compassionately respond and coordinate for the sake of people, usually individuals within a workplace or other institution, which have experienced tragic events. This paper, on the other hand, attempts to broaden the investigations by considering the compassion provided to animals in organizational contexts, with specific attention to the IFFS.

IFFS literature, which includes the systems and processes of industrialised animal slaughter (Pachirat 2011, Vialles 1994), particularly within management and organizational studies field is primarily, focused on understanding the experiences of workers in slaughterhouse settings (Meara 1974, Baran, Rogelberg, and Clausen 2016, Ackroyd and Crowdy 1990). However, some research shows the problem in trying to picture and feel what it might be like to be a livestock animal in such settings where the end result is animal death. For instance, the fieldwork study conducted by Ackroyd and Crowdy on slaughtermen in an English abattoir documented a group of men on the factory floor that conducted their work in a rowdy but repetitive manner when undertaking the actual work of slaughter. The groups were identified as 'an inclusive occupational sub-culture with distinctive core values of realism and aggressive masculinity' (1990, 10). The worker's "realist" frame of reference did not question the ethics of animal slaughter as most people in society ate meat, which justified their work roles and also seems to give them a sense of solidarity.

In more recent work, the nature of compassion for animals in IFFS is explored in more detail, revealing it can be more readily felt for some animals over others. For example, Hamilton and McCabe (2016) conducted an ethnographically inspired study of twenty meat inspectors from the Food Standards Agency in the United Kingdom, whose central task is to ensure that a range of safety standards are met, which includes that meat processing plants adhere to animal welfare standards. They focused on inspectors who were visiting chicken processing plants with an aim to investigate the emotions that the inspectors had for these animals. They found that compassion has a limited focus as 'the professional interest in animal welfare did not

include an expression of compassion or pity for the birds beyond ensuring that their deaths were painless' (2016, 342). However, compassion was more readily felt for other animals besides the chickens. There were interviews with inspectors who spoke of other animals with surprisingly deep compassion, such as the plight of neglected horses, what appeared to be a crippled lamb in a field and slaughtering other livestock for the certification of Kosher and Halal meat.

Furthermore, Hamilton and McCabe considered the lives of chickens by detailing how they became de-animalised, which refers to how the 'act of killing and the identity of the other species (other than as commodities) are erased' (2016, 334). In their analysis of how the chickens became de-animalised they observed, vis-à-vis Ackroyd and Crowdy's study, how their case was different as 'it was technology rather than cultural factors that regulated the speed and output of those on the line' (2016, 338). Although one can dispute sectioning off the cultural from the technological, they noted the environment did not facilitate sociality, 'the repetitive, solitary work processes, the high noise levels necessitated ear protection and there was limited conversation or joking that characterizes other factories' (2016, 338). In addition, researchers saw the design of the factory and work performed on chickens' bodies as sectioned off in ways whereby the initial whole live bodies were immediately transformed into parts for human consumption. Given this environment, the inspectors seemed to show 'an intriguing, apparently unemotional and almost "mechanized" disregard for the chickens they were directly involved in killing' (2016, 338).

The ethnographic research from meat processing plants that are part of the IFFS show that compassion is difficult to realise and not provided all that much to the animals that were killed. Workplace culture, technology and design all play a part in ensuring livestock are commodities for human use. However, what can be gleaned from these studies but insufficiently explored are those repetitive processes in the production of meat within processing plants. In other words, there is a rhythm, or possibly an array of rhythms at play that create an organizational space where all is predictable and determined – a live animal will enter the factory and will leave as a form of food – with the machines and people all working towards this end. Furthermore, as previous stated, rhythms do interact with the body's senses, so rhythms assist in creating, altering, changing or modifying what one feels. This may mean, for instance, that the inspectors' "mechanized disregard" for the deaths of the chickens in the last study, implies that their bodies work *in rhythm* with the mechanical nature of the organizational environment, which seems to restrict compassionate sentiments for the slaughtered animals.

Rhythm and Henri Lefebvre

Re-orientating thought to rhythm opens the possibility of asking new questions and drawing on knowledge about rhythms that is yet to be considered in organizational studies. For instance, is it possible to conceive the IFFS as linked or held together by rhythms to produce its final outputs? Moreover, humans and animals have a sense of rhythm and readily respond to the rhythmic patterns in a wider environment (Sheets-Johnstone 2005), which organizations are obviously part of. Our interest in exploring rhythms thus takes us to one of the few thinkers who attempted to theorise its function in the modern social world: Henri Lefebvre. His final work, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* collates all his essays on rhythms, along with those he co-authored with Catherine Régulier. In this article, this text provides a basis to explore how rhythms of the IFFS shape the provision of compassion for animals.

More broadly within the field of organizational studies there is a substantial amount of work drawing on Lefebvre so as conceptualise the issue of organizational space and its interaction

with power and resistance (Dale 2005, Dale and Burrell 2008) on the ideas of scales (Spicer 2006), learning (Beyes and Michels 2011) and organisational aesthetics (Wasserman 2015). The main idea seems to emphasise how Lefebvre's scholarship assists in understanding the social production of space. More recently, scholars engaged with Lefebvre's work on everyday life and how it could provide the 'ephemeral subversion' to resist organizational control (Courpasson 2017, 847). Lefebvre's work on rhythms though is yet to be fully engaged with in organization studies with Beyes and Steyaert (2012) suggesting it could be a fruitful route.

A key feature of rhythm, for Lefebvre's, is that it has a repetitive quality. 'In the field of rhythm,' he writes, 'certain very broad concepts nonetheless have specificity: let us immediately cite repetition. No rhythm without repetition in time and in space, without *reprises*, without returns, in short without measure [*mesure*]' (Lefebvre 2004, 6). As noted in the literature review, studies about the IFFS raise the repetitional nature of the work that goes into converting live animals into products for human purposes, which in turn suggests these are 'sites of rhythmic production' (Chen 2016, 4).

His rhythmanalytic writings revolve around two distinct types of rhythm: the cyclical and the linear. He notes that:

Cyclical repetition and the linear repetitive separate out under analysis, but in *reality* interfere with one another constantly. The cyclical originates in the cosmic, in nature: days, nights, season, the waves and tides of the sea, monthly cycles, etc. The linear would come rather from social practice, therefore from human activity: the monotony of actions and of movements, imposed structures (8).

The cyclical rhythms are a series of events that are part of the natural world but further include those cycles within the lifetime of an organism as expressed with, for example, 'passing through of the beatings of the heart, the blinking of eyelids and breathing' (76), while linear rhythms tend to originate from human culture, which can include relatively mundane social practices, such as the set times for meals and work.

Over time, linear rhythms have become 'depicted only as monotonous, tiring and even intolerable' (76). Lefebvre traces this negative feeling about linear rhythms to the ascendance of certain type of linear rhythm that is dominant in contemporary society. At first linear rhythms simply 'designat[ed] any series of identical facts separated by long or short periods: the fall of a drop of water, the blows of a hammer, the noise of an engine, etc.' however 'in industrial practice, where the linear repetitive tends to dominate, the struggle is intense' (76). Industry relies on using timed repetition to produce its outputs, which has intensified by the advancement of watches in capitalist and industrial societies so that 'desacralised time has emerged victorious since it supplied *the measure of the time of work*' (Lefebvre, 73). Time is effectively calculated to help create and manage regular repetitions of work for some intended end for the sake of industry, and such timed repetitions in this article are called industrial linear rhythms.

He also notes that there are 'dominating-dominated rhythms'(18) and this may manifest in some rhythms being so powerful that bodies are drawn into the dominating rhythms, sometimes forced to succumb to them despite bodily protestations. For example, 'he who rises at six in the morning because of his work' he writes, 'is perhaps still sleepy and in need of sleep' (75). The rhythm to work, which is based on the social expectation to work in capitalist societies and

maintained by the industrial linear rhythms that specify the time of work, partly controls a person's circadian rhythms.

In short, there are both cyclical and linear rhythms at play in the world. Over time, the industrial linear rhythms have come to dominate and have an ability to negatively impact on the rhythms of the human bodies. In the context of this article there is a focus on how rhythms of the IFFS impact on the compassion provided to animals because, as Lefebvre believes, the exploitation of animal bodies *precedes* the use of human bodies for industrial ends:

The domination-exploitation of human being begins with animals, wild beasts and cattle; the humans associated with these inaugurated an experience that would turn back against them: killings, stockbreeding, slaughters, sacrifices and (in order better to submit) castration. All these practices were put to the test and succeeded (52).

Lefebvre's theorisation on rhythms is abstracted from an environment where capitalism and industry are powerful forces and acknowledges, much like the first generation of scholars from the Frankfurt School, that such societies are built on the suffering of animals (Gunderson, 2014). However, unlike the Frankfurt School scholars, he does not make an explicit appeal for social researchers to make a normative commitment to being more kindly, empathic or compassionate to animals (Gunderson, 2014).

The more-than-human, animal vulnerability

To better appreciate how rhythms of the IFFS shape the provision of compassion to animals, our work is theoretically informed by a more-than-human sensibility (see Abram 1996, Plumwood 1999, Whatmore 2006). This places the animal at the centre of researchers' concerns because as Sayer (2016) notes, in her thought-provoking essay on challenging carnophallogocentrism, organizational studies scholars need to develop ways to meaningfully respond to the presence and roles of animals in organizational life whilst subverting the doctrine of human exceptionalism.

A more-than-human theoretical approach can be found in Anat Pick's (2011) work on animals in literature and film, where she deploys the concept of vulnerability to be more attentive to animal life. Drawing on the philosophical writings of Simone Weil, she argues for 'creaturely poetics' for 'the creature, then, is first and foremost a living – body – material, temporal, and vulnerable' (5). At the same time, vulnerability is not a mundane fact of life. Weil (1953 as cited in Pick, 2011, 3) believes that: 'The vulnerability of precious things is beautiful because vulnerability is the mark of existence.' At the first instance, it seems counterintuitive to conceive of vulnerability of living beings as beautiful, particularly when violence is inflicted upon them. But if, as Pick (2011) argues, 'fragility and finitude possess a special kind of beauty, this conception of beauty is already inherently ethical. It implies a sort of *sacred recognition* (our emphasis) of life's value as material and temporal' (3). In turn, this understanding of sacredness invites a reverence for the lives of others for it encourages a mode of thought that in our view is an expansive love. A type of love that encourages love for those sentient beings, both animal and human, that are commonly overlooked in culture and organization. Animals, Pick argues, are those 'vulnerable outliers at the mercy of mechanisms that serve and stimulate human desires and needs' (in press, para. 4) and as such can be viewed as especially sacred, needing to be revered in some way and further requiring our attention. However, in our reading of Pick work, such attention to vulnerable animals bodies respects their differences, this is a form of heteropathic identification, where one 'acknowledges the separateness of the other: this style of identification does not presuppose an imaginary unity yet is capable of

sympathising with the other' (Nava 2007, 72). Understanding that each being is sentient, prone to harm, sacred but different from the human helps create an approach to thinking about animals in biosocial organization in a more sensitive manner.

Reading cultural objects with rhythm analysis as a guide

A way to be more cognizant of these vulnerabilities can be reached through film for it is considered a multisensory experience as 'an image is not visual but multisensory comprising all the information that one's senses perceived about the object' (Marks 2000, 146). Film is an established medium by which to research organizational life (Bell 2008, Bell and Davison 2013). It is therefore productive to use this visual medium to consider animal and human relationships in organizations, particularly since the films selected in this paper are considered cultural objects that form the assemblage of the IFFS.

The films to be analysed in this article are further cultural objects (i.e., human creations with purpose) and are sequenced here to offer a "cultural chronology" of how animals become organized and managed within the IFFS. In Wiseman's film *Meat* viewers witness how animals become meat in the latter part of the twentieth century. Geyrhalter's *Our Daily Bread* informs viewers about the contemporaneous situation of food production. Romanek's *Never Let Me Go* offers viewers a possible future where the IFFS moves to include certain humans.

Cultural objects generally make comment about the society or wider culture in which they are created. Drawing on hermeneutical, critical and post-structural theoretical perspectives within the humanities, the pioneering work of Mieke Bal (2003) on cultural objects indicates they have significant meanings for society:

The qualifier cultural in 'cultural analysis' indicates, instead, a distinction from traditional disciplinary practice within the humanities, namely the analysis of various objects gleaned from the cultural world for closer scrutiny are analysed in view of their existence in culture. This means they are not seen as isolated jewels, but as things always-already engaged, as interlocutors, within the larger culture from which they emerged. It also means that 'analysis' looks at issues of cultural relevance, and aims to articulate how the object contributes to cultural debates (33).

Films are usually made with the intention of being seen by others in society, particularly when they document and reference some social phenomena, in this case the IFFS. The films then are contributing to our knowledge, amongst other things, on how animals are managed and organized within the IFFS. In turn, they can be part of the assemblage which makes up the IFFS because they cannot lay outside it for 'images are constantly acting and reacting on each other, producing and consuming. There's no difference at all between, *images*, *things*, and motion' (Deleuze 1995, 42). This means that the images of the IFFS, as played out in these films, are not merely representations of its physical presence in the world – these images help constitute it within a society.

Cultural objects communicate understanding such as knowledge, ideas or values to people because they have the potential to emotionally move them in some way. Van Alphen (2008), a contemporary of Bal, notes that 'the transmission of affects by texts, films, or paintings is then no longer an imprecise, metaphorical way of speaking our admiration for, or dislike of, the cultural objects' it rather is an 'adequate way of describing what cultural objects can do to us, and of how they are active agents in the cultural and social world' (25). He also believes that sensibility of the viewer matters, which is to some extent shaped by historical conditions and

the contemporary perspectives that inform the viewer. This may not distract from experiencing the emotional intensity of a cultural object on the viewer or reader but it does suggest that implicit social codes or rules may encourage particular emotional responses, however, as Van Alphen comments, ‘the fact that affects should be seen as energetic intensities implies that they are *relational* and that they are always the result of an interaction between work and beholder’ (26). However, it is through the practice of cultural analysis that attempts are made to make sense of the emotional operations of cultural objects, which are imbedded within the social-material world, otherwise one cannot make *analytic sense* of these assemblages.

The analysis of cultural objects is akin to the process of a “close reading” that is visually orientated. ‘Objects are interpreted through “reading” using the gaze’ writes Bal, ‘which is combined with broader sensory experiences involving tacit knowledge and embodied responses’ (Bal 2008, 178). Moreover, although these cultural objects are primarily visual mediums, ‘vision itself is inherently *synesthetic*’ because other sensations are stirred by the act of looking (Bal 2008, 171). Therefore, the practice of analysing these films is an interpretivist endeavour where the analyst pays close attention to how the object impacts on her or him. At the same time, the analyst recognises the object’s existence and circulation in the present-day is due to it maintaining, shaping or challenging prevailing societal values, norms or dominant cultural forces (Bal 2011). Any initial reading starts from the present, as opposed to a conventional historical analysis, as this mode of reading ‘endorses the idea that image [along with text and sound] exists for viewers, who can do with them what they please, and will do so within frame of reference that society has set up for them’ (Bal 2008, 165) with the contemporary perspectives of the analyst informing their reading.

The reading of these cultural objects then is informed by a more-than-human sensibility that centralises the issues of animals being vulnerable bodies and is further informed by Lefebvre’s writings about rhythms, which is ‘based on the conception that people, places and things as having rhythms in relation to our minds and bodies. This places an emphasis on repetition, measure, and the way things are linked’ (Pigum 2008, 793). Rhythmanalysis, as developed by Lefebvre, is a method of analysis that has been largely used in areas of geography and related fields¹ (Fen 2012, Sgibnev 2015, Simpson 2012). Here his approach is extended to consider the rhythms of the IFFS as conveyed in film, which has a precedence, for example, in the work of Yi Chen (2013), who deployed rhythmanalysis to identify the rhythmic interactions of an urban landscape as conveyed in structural documentary.

When conducting rhythmanalysis, the researcher becomes a rhythm analyst who ‘thinks with his [sic] body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality’ (Lefebvre 2004, 21). Lefebvre believes that the work of a rhythm analyst is a deep bodily experience where: ‘He [sic] listens first to his body; he learns rhythm from it, in order consequently to appreciate external rhythms. His body serves him as a metronome’ (2004, 19). This can create analytic insights into how things in the social world function because one viscerally engages and reacts with these external rhythms to generate thought as ‘the concept of rhythm is grasped at the level of the sensory... rhythm is a *meta-sense* which synthesises bodily and extra-bodily impressions’ (2016, 2). Reading for rhythm is then an opportunity to make sense of the more ephemeral qualities of social life.

To sum up, there is a reading of three culturally relevant films which is informed by the perspective that animal bodies are vulnerable and by rhythmanalysis. This is underpinned with

¹ As we mentioned above the literature in Organisation Studies engages more with Lefebvre’s work on space.

the recognition that animals often experience vulnerability – a creaturely poetics. In the subsequent sections of the article, we both discuss and analyse the films in sequence to answer how the rhythms of the IFFS shape the provision of compassion for animals and then make our concluding remarks.

Meat

Many of Wiseman's films focus on life in institutions so they 'serve as contemporary ethnographies of organizations, chronicling in sometimes graphic detail the norms, culture, values and systems within organizations' (Scherer and Baker 1999, 144). This ethnographic quality is because Wiseman deploys an observational mode of filmmaking that is framed by cinematic naturalism and realism. This means, he eschews blatantly interpretative editorial techniques, such as the inclusion of non-diegetic sounds and instead favours creating a description of the world so viewers believe they 'look on as social actors go about their lives as if the camera were not present' (Nichols 2010, 150). To achieve this, it requires Wiseman to manipulate the huge amount of footage he collects to create a smoothness in chronology (Grant 2014). However, his final works are always faithful attempts at conveying organizational life to a wider public.

Wiseman's documentary, *Meat*, follows his established style. It opens with a series of shots of the great cattle country of North America. After appreciating the cattle in this bucolic landscape, viewers see cowboys herding the cattle into a yard where farmhands guide the cattle onto a massive truck that takes them to a cattle auction house. As the film progresses, there are shots of bellowing cattle in muddy and cramped feedlots surrounding the meat processing plant. Soon enough, viewers become privy to the whole process and rhythms by which animals become pieces of meat.

At this point, though, it is worth noting that the film is not entirely about the cattle's journey to become meat and later sheep as well, Wiseman also captures scenes of work related to the manufacture of the final product. For example, there are scenes of Japanese businessmen who visit the plant for investment purposes. There are also scenes of men on phones in the offices of the plant, bullishly negotiating deals with buyers. Although these scenes do not focus on the cattle and sheep becoming meat, they stress the point that that this is a profit-making business that requires effort to be effectively and efficiently managed. These scenes further help set the parameters on how to consider the cattle and sheep in this film; they are largely quantifiable economic units.

The rhythms on the factory floor have a linear rhythmic quality, as all work happens at a uniform and repetitive pace with human bodies in close and often tactile proximity to animal bodies. For example, the trotting of the livestock animal into the chamber to be stunned; the worker who hooks up the bulky animal that sways on the overhead conveyor belt and twitches with the remains of life; the worker that cuts them to let their warm blood gush onto the floor through which workers must wade; the workers who flay the animal skin that clings onto the flesh beneath, etc. At every stage, once a task is completed then another appears for the same treatment. Each of these tasks with their respective movements and sounds keep the workers in rhythm. The viewers can also sense how messy, sweaty and tiring such work would be as we follow the one directional process where the live animals transform into meat. Eventually, viewers can begin to see things that are closer to resembling meat. The whole process of meat then happens at a methodological but expeditious pace, which to all intents and purposes is not

only an industrial linear rhythm but also presents as perennial rhythm because the opening shots suggest that there will be a continuous supply of animals from the countryside.

The industrial linear rhythm of producing meat is occasionally punctured by brief scenes where an animal escapes from the truck or holding bay and needs to be brought under human control or with the occasional close-up shot of the face of individual livestock animal. For example, the camera zooms into a bovine's face within a vast ocean of other animal bodies in a feedlot, which is perhaps long enough in duration to invite viewers of the film to feel a degree of compassion for the animal because its fate is sealed. This shot can also be conceived of as a point-of-view shot from a worker's perspective, who is acknowledging the bovine's gaze. However, it is unknown what such a worker could feel within this interspecies encounter, but the intent stare of a live being cannot be denied as it would likely leave some type of emotional impression upon the worker.

Lefebvre believes that a rhythm analyst '[is] always 'listening out', but he [sic] does not only hear words, discourses, noises and sounds; he is capable of listening to a house, a street, a town as one listens to a symphony, an opera' (2004, 87). Being a rhythm analyst means one draws on or absorbs the sensorial impressions of the wider environment, which may include taking in the affects and emotions in a particular social space (see Brennan 2004). When one 'listens' to the process of producing meat, the linear rhythms are so intensely timed, and focused on the task at hand that the space is uncondusive in affording much compassion to animals facing slaughter. At best, a viewer could speculate that a wish to prevent an individual slaughter could be a private thought of a worker. Especially in those moments when an animal and worker look at each other, there is an intensity in those encounters that create a moment of pause. However, such moments are unlikely be a catalyst to providing any more compassion to the animal, for instance, finding a way to spare its life. This is a system where each animal is an economic unit whose flesh helps pays each worker's wages. A concerted provision of compassion for the animals within the IFFS explored in *Meat* is very difficult to imagine and almost impossible to realise.

Our Daily Bread

Geyrhalter's film embraces a Wisemanesque ethnographic style but rather than focusing on one organization or industry, it spans various organizations that rear or process animals and plants for food. Viewers are presented with multiple narratives from various sites which make up the IFFS of particular food industries, such as the chicken and pork industries. They witness and tune into rhythms of a narrative where they see the birth, growth, maturation, harvest and finally the processing of food for human consumption.

It is within *Our Daily Bread* that the experience of sounds and silences provide further insights into the rhythms of food production in the twenty-first century. Lefebvre offers the idea that the rhythm analyst is something akin to a psychoanalyst in that: 'He [sic] will be attentive, but not only to the words of pieces of information, the confessions and confidences of a partner or client. He will listen to the world, and above all to what are disdainfully called noises...and finally he will listen to silences' (2004, 19). It is through sounds and silences that rhythms of a space can be felt and articulated.

As an example of an industry depicted in the film, where sounds and silence help to make sense of rhythms present, is related to the production of chicken meat, particularly in their rearing. Geyrhalter takes a mid-shot of a single man in a dark space who peers through a window into well-lit room where chicks are stacked into plastic crates. In this shot, viewers can hear

the low murmuring of air conditioning and the muffled chirping of innumerable chicks behind the window. Viewers, perhaps informed by memories from childhood excursions to rural family-run farms or petting zoos, may feel uneasy or surprised with the scene presented. There are just chicks – there are no mother hens in sight. The next shot is a wide angle shot that reveals a huge and spotless corridor lined with doors, where the chicks are kept behind each. (Figure 1) It appears to be part of a chicken hatchery, but the shot gives the impression of the space being more like a research site, hospital or even modern archival facility which is relatively quiet, almost silent. The relative silence in this shot suggests control and order over other lives of the chicks as it dramatizes the displacement of their natural cyclical rhythms. Viewers perhaps imagining that during the day, on less intensive farms, the chicks would be roaming about and foraging under the watchful eye of their mother hen.

The noises, as this sequence on chicks' progress, becomes more jarring and repetitive – the industrial linear rhythms thus become more pronounced - with the chicks all chirping amongst the din of noisy large machines that are transporting and sorting them. To the eye, there are sequenced 'yellow flows' of indistinguishable groups of fluffy yellow chicks passing through convey belts and other machinery – this is visual illustration of industrial linear rhythms. At times workers grab at these 'yellow flows' of chicks and gather a small mass of them to unceremoniously throw them into chutes or plastic crates. Later in the film, there is shot of more mature chickens in a massive shed under artificial light and like a parting sea of white bodies, the birds move as a human worker walks through. Reflecting on all the scenes about the chickens, the scale of the operation, the technology and huge machines and other infrastructure result in the creation of standardised mass-produced animal products, which becomes very clear in the scenes in the meat production phase with almost identical looking chicken carcasses moving along a conveyor belt. In the pursuit of mass production then, with rhythmic coordination of technology and machines and compliant workers, an industrial linear rhythm manipulates these animal bodies into meat.

It appears that chickens' natural cycle of birth to death are so 'intimately' dominated by the industrial linear rhythms that the chickens have limited opportunity to resist. However, the rhythms of the factory cannot control all these bodies as some become "misplaced". In one scene, it seems that some chicks are on the factory floor and a worker picks them up and tosses them into a plastic crate. One chick though, hits the side of the crate and falls back to the floor. The worker instantly reacts and raises her hands in shock, picks up the bird and checks it over for injuries. She then gently lets the chick down into the crate, with degree of care that seems slightly inconsistent to the way other workers deal with the chicks, and momentarily looks upon it before leaving the camera frame, possibly to carry on with other work. Her demonstration of care seems to carry a provision of compassion for this individual animal, although this is a very rare instance within this film.

In any case, the industrial linear rhythms and the scale of technology and other infrastructure seems to create a general sense of alienation between people and animals in this film, as Porter expressed in his review of the film for 'humans and nonhuman alike find themselves trapped in the unrelenting bondage of machines' (2008, 98). The film shows workers as appanages or it could be argued, even slaves of the IFFS but in terms of the compassion provided to animals in this system, compassion is presented as isolated individual acts by workers to animals. Viewers, however, may well feel compassion for the animals, as viewers may sense the 'unnaturalness' of these industrial linear rhythms as conveyed in sound, silence and visual imagery, which may evoke contrasting memories of petting zoos and farms that were sites of low technology, where chickens had access to outside space and were reared in social groups.

The film ‘undermines the nostalgic image of happy cows frolicking in fields or contented chickens scratching in the barnyard’ (Porter 2008, 98). The industrial linear rhythms from the very beginning of the process drown out the chicks’ calls for their never-to-be-known mother hens and severely restricts the possibility of compassion. Compassion for animals may be better practiced on less intensive farms, such as free-range farms, although the problematics of this are raised in the final film.

Never Let Me Go

In the previous two films it appears that industrial linear rhythms help create a situation where it is difficult for there to be a sustained provision of compassion for animals that are part of the IFFS. *Never Let Me Go*, the final film analysed, explores the extension of the industrial linear rhythms, manifested as an organizational strategy from the IFFS, as applied to humans. Organizational strategy is here defined as the sedimentation of industrial linear rhythms of the IFFS into a culturally acceptable way to control, manage and organize animalised bodies.

The film follows the story of three children: Kathy, Tommy and Ruth, living in a pleasant English country boarding school called Hailsham under the watchful eye of Headmistress Miss Emily. The children live a lovely life at Hailsham, learning and playing games and sports on the exquisite grounds surrounding a handsome building within which they live and learn. All children have regular health checks to ensure they are well. Children also participate in art classes with the best works being selected by a woman of foreign extraction, called Madame, who exhibits them in a gallery. It is in this boarding school that a complicated love triangle develops as Tommy and Kathy begin to fall in love, however Ruth intervenes and partners up with Tommy, leaving Kathy secretly harbouring romantic feelings for Tommy.

As the film progresses, viewers learn that the children are clones of other human beings. When they become young adults, their bodies will be harvested as their materials are required to keep humans alive. Once they turn eighteen Kathy, Tommy and Ruth are sent to The Cottages, an example of somewhat rundown halfway house in a rural location where the clones live with other clones from different institutions. It is through other clones that they hear the rumour that if a boy and girl from Hailsham can demonstrate they are truly in love then they can be ‘deferred’ from the harvesting programme or what is euphemistically called ‘donations’. Obviously, this leads to some infighting between Ruth and Kathy (as Ruth can sense Kathy’s love for Tommy), but Kathy removes herself from the situation by deciding to become a Carer, a person who provides support to clones who go through various cycles of organ and tissue removal before they ‘complete’.

Eventually the lives of Kathy, Tommy and Ruth intersect, and they rekindle their childhood friendships. Kathy is now a fully-fledged Carer who in her words is pleased with her work as: ‘Patients always do better than expected and are hardly ever classified as agitated even if they are about to make a donation.’ Ruth is undergoing the donations and it appears her next will be her last and Tommy has already been harvested four times. Tommy informs the other two that Hailsham was closed down and that: ‘The only schools left now are like battery farms, like Morning Dale, I’m sure that’s an exaggeration’. However, viewers are left wondering if Tommy is trying to reassure himself that humans will not treat the clones as badly as their animal counterparts.

Ruth also confesses to Tommy and Kathy that she knew they had romantic feelings for each other but did not want to be alone and so stole Tommy away. Now in the face of death, she wants to atone for her wrongdoing. She provides them with the address of Hailsham’s former

Headmistress, Miss Emily. She tells them they can go and visit her with examples of Tommy's art, which will provide evidence of the love between Tommy and Kathy, thus they should then be granted a deferral from the donations.

Kathy and Tommy head off to Miss Emily's house and are invited inside by Madame, who appears to be living there. However, their plea for mercy, is to no avail as Miss Emily explains to them that:

You have to understand, Hailsham was the last place to consider the ethics of donation. We used your art to show what you are capable of, to show that donor children are all but human. But we were providing an answer to a question no one was asking. If you ask people to return to days of darkness, days of lung cancer, breast cancer, motor neuron disease – they'll simply say no.

With this information both Kathy and Tommy leave but upon departing Madame gently strokes Kathy's face and says something that reminds the clones of their animality: 'You poor creatures, I wish I could help you'. Although these two human beings demonstrate concern for the clones and perhaps feel a degree of compassion for them they cannot change their material fates, which is a premature death, as the wider social context will not allow it.

Miss Emily and Madame seem to belong to a social faction who were in support of providing compassion to these clones but lost the fight which is signified by the closing of Hailsham. For as an organization, Hailsham can be viewed as a "free-range farm" that provided these cloned humans with a 'good life' before they become purposed for harvesting, much like what could be socially accepted in certain contemporary animal welfare discourses. However, in this fictitious world of the future, the stakes are higher because the clones are used to maintain human health. The clones' exclusion from being classed as human and the mention that other institutions operating as if they were "battery farms" to raise them suggests that they are animalised bodies, essentially fit for formal organizational to control from birth to death.

The linear rhythms of the IFFS manifest as an organizational strategy that is brought to bear on certain humans. Their treatment, as informed by this strategy, is uncannily like that of animals within the IFFS. Although there are no explicit industrial linear rhythms depicted in this film they form part of the 'cultural undercurrents' that determine the way the animalised bodies are processed. For in much the same way, as in Wiseman's film, the clones, as the cattle, start off life in a pristine environment and move to more degrading conditions and are subsequently processed for human purposes. Moreover, these clones, as the chicks in Geyrhalter's film, are produced and enmeshed in technologies that render them parentless. Although there does seem to be some compassionate provision made for them with the provision of carers during the donation phase. However, the closing of the 'free-range farm' of Hailsham along with Tommy's discussion on the normalised practice of rearing clones in 'battery farms' undermines any *current progress* made for animal welfare and rights in *our present* in this yet-to-be-realised future.

In reading these films and drawing attention to the first question we posed, the industrial linear rhythms shape a provision of compassion that is expressed in a piecemeal and localised manner. Human workers who briefly fall out of time with rhythmic running of things demonstrate some compassion or other associated emotions for the animal-other. However, as in the case of *Never Let Me Go*, there were educational professionals such as Miss Emily who were politically invested in educating a broader society about providing compassion to animalised bodies that are ambiguously human. What comes through with the analysis and discussion so far is that

the industrial linear rhythm takes on a quality of being what we call a perennial rhythm – it manipulates the cyclical rhythms of animals' birth, life and death for industrial ends.

Conclusion: Limited compassion and new research strategy

All these films depict, as cultural objects, how animals are malleable to the forces of linear rhythms in the IFFS. Ultimately, all individual animals are resources, which further indicates their deaths are rationalised and that anything that can be labelled 'an animal' can be vulnerable to the industrial linear rhythms of the IFFS. This is plausible given there is a long history of animal use for as Lefebvre sees it 'the living [animals] (except those who accepted domestication, such as cats and dogs) provided a raw material, a *primary substance* [matière première] that each society treated in its own way' (2004, 52). In other words, animals have been viewed and used as an important foundation for societies. If we return to Lefebvre's remarks about animals being firstly dominated and exploited by humans before the rise of industry and capitalism, then the limited provision of compassion is regrettably unsurprising.

However, across all these films, there does not seem to be evidence of wanton cruelty or blatant mistreatment of animals that characterised human-animal relations in other times, such as Georgian and Victorian Britain, which progressively diminished with a change in public attitudes and laws to protect some animals from human violence (Ritvo 1987, Krawczyk and Hamilton-Bruce 2015). What has arisen then for the animals in the IFFS, as seen in these cultural objects, is a limited form of compassion where animals are treated with a basic degree of care, which is underpinned by the acceptance that animals and animalised bodies are fit to be used for human purposes. Consequently, their deaths are not unusual nor tragic. The rhythms here do not leave much time for contemplation for those animal or animalised bodies within the system, therefore the provision of compassion for such beings within the IFFS are unlikely to be abundant.

At this paper's opening, Sontag declared one can become bored, cynical or apathetic with the suffering of others, particularly when one cannot identify a way to help end it. This may also be the reaction from viewers of these films, for the linear industrial rhythms create a space where there is much indifference toward animal life and if one is ethically troubled by animal death, the films offer no possible solutions. In any case, as cultural objects, these films play an important role in creating discussion and debate on the ways intensive and factory farming is carried out and here they became the basis of exploring the provision of compassion for animals in the IFFS with the acknowledgement from the outset that animals are vulnerable beings. More generally though, this research makes a contribution to encourage cultural and organizational researchers, to continue to investigate the provision of compassion by humans to nonhuman beings and other entities in this more-than-human world.

It seems that the linear rhythms of the IFFS are very dominant and hinder the development of a richer sense of compassion for animals or animalised bodies and it bends cyclical rhythm of animal life to create a perennial rhythm. Considering this finding, it may be that pity is felt for these animals and animalised bodies rather than compassion, as there may be no genuine wish or desire to change their fates. At this point one can perhaps read that the event of animals breaking from the truck or holding bay, the chick that was checked for injury and the clones that approached Madame's residence to ask for a deferral as actual repetitions in time. These events on the films are the routine and mundane realities of work in the IFFS of capitalist societies. It therefore appears that there is no definable limit to the disciplining effects of the industrial linear rhythms and that compassion for animals within the system can never be fully realised. However, these events happened and continue to occur with a sense of singularity

rather than be mundane repetition in that *each* animal is vulnerable, in the most extreme sense of the term, which is sensed more highly through the heteropathic identification. In fact, the cultural objects analysed here create a moment of crisis where the mundane and repetitive nature of the IFFS is bracketed out of our emotional response to suffering – there is pure affective flow. As Bal (2002: 128) comments, ‘heteropathic identification can be and often is, socially productive, in that it wrenches the subject outside herself, enticing her to go meet the other on their ground’. Imagining that each animal’s experiences of the IFFS will never change due to the power of certain rhythms paradoxically can encourage a line of flight to test the limits of the disciplinary powers of industrial linear rhythms that take on this perennial quality.

In order to test the power of industrial linear rhythms and its perennial quality, it is worth exploring other rhythms within or perhaps outside IFFS as strategy discover the many potential weaknesses of industrial linear rhythms that create this organizational space of infrequent expressions of compassion or even just personal feelings of pity for these animals. Lefebvre is rather perceptive in stating that there are situations where:

Rhythms produces antagonistic effects. It *throws out of order* and disrupts; it is symptomatic of a disruption that is generally profound, lesional and no longer functional. It can also produce a lacuna, a hole in time, to be filled in by an invention, a creation. That only happens, individually or socially, by passing through a *crisis*. Disruptions and crises always have origins in and effects on rhythms: those of institutions, of growth, of the population, of exchanges, of work, therefore those which make or express the complexity of present society (2004, 44).

If it is the intention that organizational and management researchers make a normative commitment to be compassionate to animals, then it would be productive to identify alternative rhythms that disrupt the existing linear rhythms found there. However, the promise of finding alternative rhythms or at least testing the limits of the industrial linear rhythms would require research strategies, in the first instance, which continue to broaden the understanding of industrial linear rhythms in relation to other rhythms. Regardless of whether the rhythm analyst embodies an animal welfare, rights or another frame of reference that is deeply concerned with the vulnerabilities animals or animalised bodies face, we propose a research strategy to expand our understanding of linear industrial rhythms in relation to other rhythms, as it is anticipated that alternative rhythm may be found to foster more compassion for animals in the IFFS.

While there is value in focusing one kind of rhythm, that being the linear industrial rhythms here, which was followed to document its effects for animals, Yi Chen, in articulating methodologies for rhythm analysis proposes that: ‘Starting from a distinguished rhythm, the rhythm analysis is instructed to map out a polyrhythmia of social processes by exploring how a singular rhythm is mutually presupposed by associating it with other sites of rhythms’ (2016, 6). To identify rhythms that may challenge the industrial linear rhythms that seemingly create indifference to animal lives, it may be good to investigate how linear industrial rhythm are discussed and depicted across other cultural objects, and it would be of value to further the investigation to other organizational sites in some antagonistic relation to this rhythm.

In the films analysed here, regarding the IFFS, there seems to be a very restrictive sense of compassion in operation, if animal death is viewed as ethically problematic of course. Such a situation may remain unchanged while linear industrial rhythms continue to dominate. However, one must consider that these rhythms function in a society where attitudes to animals are subject to change and this too needs further analysis to test the limits of linear industrial

rhythm on vulnerable bodies. For example, if animal rights became a powerful discourse would the industrial linear rhythms of the IFFS continue to exert influence? More importantly, it has been shown that there are those affective moments in these cultural objects that demonstrate, in their absolute singularity, the power of compassion to move workers within the films and move those viewers who watch on. It is of vital importance that a cultural mode of analysis as guided by rhythmanalysis continues, which shows promise in challenging these dominant linear industrial rhythms and finding their limits, when the cultural object creates a moment of crisis, so that positive change can occur for animals and animalised bodies caught in the IFFS.



Figure 1. Our Daily Bread – film still of facility where chicks are hatched. Our Daily Bread © Directed by Nikolaus Geyrhalter. Brooklyn, NY: First Run Icarus Films, 2005. DVD. Reproduced here with permission from NGF Nikolaus Geyrhalter Filmproduktion GmbH

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