

What would ‘inclusive journalism’ have felt like for the pig?

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Author Biography (99 words)

Dr Alex Lockwood runs the MA Journalism programmes at the University of Sunderland, where he is a member of the Centre for Research in Media and Cultural Studies. He has published widely on representations of climate change, and the literary journalism of Rachel Carson. He is interested in changing our species’ relations to other species, post-human writing practices, and is the author of *The Pig in Thin Air* (Lantern Books, NY). He regularly contributes articles to a range of magazines, and is working on the handbook *Environmental Journalism and Writing* for Routledge, due 2017.

Abstract (150 words)

The idea of the inclusive society as a policy instrument is based upon equality of opportunities and the equal capacity of members regardless of differences such as gender and faith. Operating within society, the idea of inclusive journalism follows this model, including the anthropocentric practices that *exclude* the living conditions and concerns of most nonhuman animals. This article argues that for journalism to be truly inclusive the anthropocentric nature of both society and the media must be exposed, and our social practices extended beyond the species divide. The article begins by illustrating the common journalistic practices of reporting on farmed animals, before exploring the new practices of Animal Journalism and, within scholarship, the field of Critical Media and Animal Studies. The article then turns to political theory before suggesting Donaldson and Kymlicka’s concept of positive relational rights can be placed at the centre of a non-anthropocentric and inclusive journalism practice.

Keywords

Inclusive journalism, anthropocentrism, #PigGate, citizenship, nonhuman animals, animal rights

Introduction

So when, I wondered, was a journalist going to ask whether or not the pig gave her consent for the Prime Minister to put his penis into her mouth?

This was never going to happen. To begin with, the pig at the centre of what came to be known in autumn 2015 as #PigGate was already dead, and could not answer for herself. She was not a whole pig but a severed head, a culinary symbol of largesse amongst the upper classes of Great Britain. She was served up on a silver platter at an invite-only party during Prime Minister David Cameron's student days, a story told in half-shocking revelations by his former friend Lord Ashbrooke in an unofficial autobiography, *Call Me Dave*, serialized in the mid-market tabloid *The Daily Mail*.

The second reason that no journalist asked whether or not a pig would consent to being killed, cooked, and objectified as a sexual plaything, is that the overwhelming majority of journalists globally do not consider nonhuman animals to be anything *other* than objects (sexualized or not), property, and/or food. Nonhuman animals are not journalistic sources, and are believed not to be able to answer questions with responses that can be translated into human languages. (Although many nonhuman animals have proven, from cetaceans to apes, that human animals are far from the only species with the capacity for communication and even vocal learning.)¹

Despite individual animals often finding themselves implicated in the lead in stories such as #PigGate, they remain without membership of the human society on which journalism focuses. While nonhuman animals appear as characters, their *concerns* almost never figure in the calculations of who and what the media covers in its 'shoe leather reporting.'² This is especially apparent when the media engages with concepts of how journalism might operate within an inclusive society. This article argues that analyses of inclusivity in journalism must look into how the media reports on the vast numbers of nonhuman animal others on whom our social fabric and identities are built. I will look at the nascent field of Animal Journalism, to explore the principles of reporting that does not simply reference animals, but makes nonhuman concerns its beat. The article will take a closer look at an example of how nonhuman animals' concerns are elided from journalism coverage—especially when it is what we humans do to the nonhuman that is central to the story. I will also look briefly at the ways in which journalism scholarship has—or more precisely, has not—given consideration to the nonhuman within the field of study. I will turn to the ways in which political theorists have engaged with the 'animal question' to help us challenge anthropocentric worldviews. And finally, I offer an

alternative for societal relations between human and nonhuman species, suggesting what a non-anthropocentric journalism might look like in practice.

An inclusive society and an inclusive journalism?

The conventional idea of ‘inclusive journalism’ as it is critiqued here follows the concept of an ‘inclusive society’ as formulated as a policy instrument at the national and trans-national level. The idea of an inclusive society emerged in large part from French social policy in the 1970s as an element of debates around ‘social exclusion’ (Davies 2005). Concepts of social exclusion have drawn attention to the failures of welfare state policies in attending to the needs of all members of society including ostracized or persecuted groups, such as people with disabilities or those in poverty. Social exclusion has been the more utilized term to reference those on the margins of society, which has left the idea of inclusion or inclusivity as ‘under-theorized and under-discussed’ (Cohen n.d.: 3). However one wants to consider the inclusion/exclusion pairing, the ‘inclusive society’ is a well-understood term within political social policy, and as Gidley et al. (2010: 6) argue ‘a contested term in both academic and policy literature entailing a range of interpretations.’ These contestations are in ‘relation to areas (who is to be included?) and degrees (ideologies) of inclusion.’ Putting aside these qualifications, perhaps Allman (2013: 1) has described the practices of an inclusive or exclusionary society best, when he writes that ‘in the social world, whether one is welcomed, represented, or provided for by the mainstream, or whether one is ostracized, ignored, or bemired, the outcome is a collection of social practices. These social practices result from various degrees of intimacy and interactions between friends, strangers, families, colleagues, kinship groups, communities [and] cultures.’

For we practitioners and media scholars, ‘inclusive journalism’ would warrant the consideration of the role it plays in these interactions. The media can and does play an important and immediate role in presenting dynamics of power in social practices, not only representing the interactions of others but also helping shape discourse on who is to be included/excluded in society (such as immigrants and refugees). My argument is that for journalism to be truly inclusive it must go beyond the commonly understood uses of the terms (as contested as they might be), because the terms are, in their role as policy instruments, purely anthropocentric. For journalism to be inclusive, the anthropocentric nature of both society and the media within that society must be exposed, so that our ‘collection of social practices’ extends beyond the species divide. If an inclusive society

is based on equality of opportunities and the equal capacity of all members, regardless of differences of race, ethnicity, faith, religion, language, gender, social status, abilities or sexual orientation etc., it is already clear that species membership is *a priori* to these considerations. An inclusive journalism ‘for one and for all’ need not, as it is currently practiced, trouble itself with the concerns of the nonhuman. The pig of #PigGate, for example, objectified as both ‘meat’ and party sex toy, has no recourse to concepts such as justice or privacy (Mills 2010) and has to like it or lump it, being unable to speak for herself; unworthy even, in the eyes of reporters, of an advocate speaking on her behalf.

Speaking for the other

And yet, as the philosopher Simone Weil (1962: 11) has said, the general problem of communicating injustice is that ‘those who most often have occasion to feel that evil is being done to them are those who are least trained in the art of speech.’ For the eighty billion land animals killed each year globally for food and clothing, the many trillion more ocean creatures, as well as the animals used for experimentation in laboratories, working animals across the developing world, and those hunted for ‘sport,’ their injustices are incommunicable. Yet the (exploited) lives of nonhuman animals are integrally bound up with our own lives, and with the sustainability of our societies. As contemporary scholars working through the critical approaches of intersectionality make clear, attempts to fathom the mechanisms of human social inclusivity will continue to miscommunicate the subject of injustice if their attempts do not also incorporate the nonhuman. And a major source of this miscommunication is the media.

The media is, as Peter Singer (1990) attests, one of the key forms through which we discover and learn about the existence and treatment of animals, especially farmed animals. The media is also, as are all major social institutions, strongly anthropocentric: in most cases, even the most trivial of wants of humans are considered more important than the critical needs (such as the desire to live) of nonhumans. If, as Alec Charles (2012: 58) says, ‘it is in the media’s power to naturalize ideology—to make ideology appear unideological’ then it is our task as media researchers to identify and critique where such ideologies are naturalized. To *not* ask what the pig might have wanted allows journalism to continue to naturalize the energies expended in Western cultural life-practices that expunge our responsibilities to the nonhuman (Nibert 2015). Such efforts take place through what Foucault has called a ‘radical malice of knowledge’ (1994: 11) in the instrumentalization of our discourses and practices. The media exercise power and

influence in the ways culture represents and relates to our knowledge of the nonhuman. And as Anat Pick (2011: 15) has said, it is in relation to the nonhuman that this ‘power operates with the fewest of obstacles.’

As Charles—I shall come back to a critique of his scholarly blind spots in a moment—continues, ‘if journalists are to function as the fourth estate, then they should not uncritically or unwittingly transmit subliminal messages of power’ (2012: 58). To engage in dialogue on its definitions, forms, and contexts, journalism cannot be fully inclusive nor live up to its expectations of challenging hegemonic notions of inequality and injustice, if it disregards its responsibilities and obligations to nonhuman others. If journalism is ‘the first rough draft of history’³ then it is worth remembering, as historian Erica Fudge (2015: 15) reminds us, that: ‘History is not freely constructed by any species; it is made within the limitations of circumstances—economic, geographical, social, and so on. Animals are, in this, just like the humans who are also adapting to circumstances: some of which are the circumstances of other species.’

To begin, I’ll first turn to an example of Carol J. Adams’ (1990) ‘absent referent’ to help reconfigure our approach to media scholarship from a non-anthropocentric position. In doing so, the caveat must be added that there are regional and cultural specificities to all forms of journalism and academic analysis. I discuss this further below.

How journalism currently covers (over) the nonhuman body

On Tuesday October 27th, 2015, the British media was saturated with the story of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) decision to classify processed and cured meats as a Class 1 known carcinogen, alongside such substances as cigarettes, asbestos and plutonium. All red meats were also officially noted as probable causes of cancer. The WHO study, carried out by scientists brought together by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, was a meta-analysis of all the available research on the subject—over 800 studies. Specifically, researchers found the risk of bowel cancer increased by 18 per cent with a daily intake of around 50g of cured or processed meats, such as sausage and bacon. The report estimated around 34,000 cancer deaths every year worldwide were attributable to eating processed and red meats.

Cancer scares are a staple of front-page stories in the UK, particularly in the mass-market tabloid papers (often known as blacktops and redtops for the colours of their mastheads). However, with the authority of the WHO, the size of the meta-analysis, and the headline-grabbing (but also misleading) comparisons to cigarettes and plutonium,

every daily newspaper carried the story either on its front page (eight papers) or within the first seven pages (two), while many also referred to the story in its leader/editorial column (four), and online. This simple content analysis of Britain's main national newspapers reveals a typical pattern of coverage analysed elsewhere (e.g. Freeman 2015); I accept it does not offer a comprehensive study, but a snapshot of a day's coverage of one story to provide illustration for my argument.

Within the ten newspapers studied,⁴ not a single reference was made to the animals from whose bodies these meats are produced. The tabloids *The Sun* and *The Star* both led with front-page headlines about meat made from the bodies of pigs ('Banger Out of Order' and 'Bacon Butty Backlash' respectively). However, neither made reference to the process by which those pigs are born into product categories, grown, slaughtered and rendered as food. There were only four references across the ten newspapers' coverage to the names of animal species, and these were already framed by their meat-producing roles: as 'chicken' and 'lamb' and not as the individual animals from the species groups of chickens and lambs. That all of this meat comes from animal bodies was never mentioned—and nor, under traditional journalistic standards, would it be. This is a 'food' story related to human health concerns and not an 'animal' issue, although in one case—the leader comment in *The Independent*—cows are mentioned. Here, they are mentioned as 'burping cows' in relation to the editorial's argument that a better reason for reducing meat consumption is the 'livestock' sector's impact on global warming. Still, the unimpeachable anthropocentric perspective remains, as the leader argues for a meat-reduced diet to prevent climate change: 'In the long run, it may be the best way to save our bacon.' The health frame of the story was emphasized by the fact that some papers (*The Independent*, *The Express*, *The Sun*) ran the story alongside another about a 'cancer-busting' tomato, while *The Mirror* led with a story about 'Human DNA in Hotdogs.'

The only other paper to reference climate change was *The Guardian*. This was in the leader comment, but framed in a different way. Arguing that 'small risks should not give rise to big health scares' *The Guardian*, in the most scathing coverage of the day (except for *The Star*, which ran with its lead 'Bacon Butty Backlash') suggested that 'it is stretching things a bit to say bacon causes cancer in the same strong sense that fossil fuels cause global warming', in an act of breathtaking myopia of the established contribution of intensive animal agriculture to climate change.⁵ The complicated, interrelated issues of the treatment of the nonhuman animals with our societal food habits is elided by these newspapers, *especially* the broadsheets, as they downplay the impact of human food

practices on sentient life and global climate change.

The main quoted sources were scientific experts from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the WHO, as well as Professor Tim Key from Cancer Research and a number of other health, cancer and food experts, especially those who had links to the meat industry, such as Professor Robert Pickard of the Meat Advisory Panel. *The Guardian*, perhaps thinking of its burgeoning audience in the United States,⁶ was keen to share the perspectives of those with links to the meat industry, in providing ‘objective balance’ to the WHO and IARC sources, such as the North American Meat Institute, the National Farmers’ Union, and the Agricultural and Horticulture Development Board, funded by the meat industry.

Who will speak for the animal?

Not a single paper considered it worthwhile reporting the views of animal advocates who might speak on behalf of farmed animals, nor, more pertinently perhaps for this ‘food’ story, did they interview any representative of a vegan or vegetarian association who might make the case for not eating meat, on health as well as ethical grounds. The only vegetarian voice in the coverage across all the newspapers was of ‘Luke, a digital media intern’ who was haphazardly caught as a voxpop by *The Guardian* as he came into their orbit outside Smithfield meat market, in London, where *Guardian* journalists had travelled to find out what people thought of the story. Luke was ‘clutching an Uncle Ben’s vegetarian rice from Tesco on his way back to work [...] When asked whether his friends cared about the WHO report and his decision to go vegetarian, he said: ‘Not really, no, there’s been a bit of ‘where’s your masculinity?’ from them, though’’ (Gani & Nicholson 2015).

This derogatory perspective on the vegetarian diet was echoed throughout the newspapers. This was most brazen in *The Star*, which went to the streets handing out bacon sandwiches to members of the public to ‘Save Our Bacon’; but it was also prevalent in both *The Guardian* and *The Times*. In *The Guardian*’s leader comment, the paper argues, ‘it is hard to see why’ a vegetarian or vegan diet that eschews animal products ‘should be encouraged. There is no particular virtue in joylessly prolonging existence’ and this despite the proven links between processed meat and cancer. *The Express* was more balanced than *The Guardian*, leading with its p.7 headline: ‘If you can avoid eating processed meat you should’. In *The Times*, a piece exploring the ways in which people could reduce their meat consumption in line with the report’s findings is

tempered with a final witticism, that eating less meat might ‘be hard news to bear, but would you rather I’d said be a vegetarian?’ None of this is surprising, especially the equation of masculinity and civility with eating meat (Adams 1990).

This analysis may have provided a more nuanced picture if the sample stories focused on living animals. However, to *not* consider stories about the carcinogenic nature of processed meats an ‘*animal* story’ would be to reinforce the anthropocentric worldview that excludes nonhuman concerns from the structuring of social practices, in this case our food habits. This sample is exemplary of what Adams (1990) identifies as the work of an ‘absent referent’ in representations of nonhuman bodies in the texts of human cultures, here the British newspapers. For Adams, behind every meal of meat is an absence, which is the death of the animals whose place is now occupied by the meat product. The referent functions to separate us from our ‘meat’ and from any conceptualization of that ‘meat’ having once been a sentient being, to keep ‘meat’ from seen as having ‘been someone’. To look at this story from a zoocentric perspective immediately reveals the ideological workings of the media in its bolstering of anthropocentrism that sustains speciesist inequalities of power. As Kate Stewart and Matthew Cole put it in their study of news reports about urban foxes, this provides a media frame that ‘performs a crucial function in legitimating speciesist social order, by ‘justifying’ violence’ (2015: 136) against the nonhuman. Nick Pendergrast (2015: 116) has found in his study of the Australian media and their coverage of live animal exports to slaughter, the mainstream media all but ignore the ‘animal rights frame’ which expounds ‘the horrors of all animal slaughter and exploitation.’ The furthest the media tends to go, Pendergrast argues, is to present the story within an animal welfare frame. The media often quotes animal welfare organizations and representatives, who accept and reinscribe the anthropocentric position of animals as property objects, which can be killed as long as their treatment is considered ‘humane’.

As these articles, and #PigGate, make clear, the lives, deaths, rights, and suffering of the majority of nonhuman animals alive today are invisible to most journalists. Of course there are a range of social norms at work in their practices, not least that within the current anthropocentric forms of Western journalism there are other competing oppressions operating intersectionally, such as the ways in which journalism privileges some humans (white, male, heterosexual) over others (for example women, people of colour, homosexual); and indeed, within our Western journalistic practices it is often the case that some animals (companion species, racing horses and dogs, charismatic

megafauna such as Cecil the Lion⁷) are treated better than many humans. Yet when considering the scale of the suffering and deaths of those animals we labels as food and that are a part of human social fabric and ways of living, we see that their desires and needs are not accounted for by our journalism. If an inclusive society and a journalism ‘for all’ is to be conceptually possible, how could such journalism be done differently?

Journalism about animals

As Hanitzsch, Hanusch and Lauerer (2016: 3) have found, the role orientations and expectations of journalists are incorporated into their work ‘as a result of their professional socialization and the internationalization of normative expectations.’ The normative expectations to which Hanitzsch, Hanusch and Lauerer refer relate to wider societal practices, such as political freedom, but also gender, class, race and (although it is not within the scope of their analysis) species. However, their argument that ‘journalists do not operate within a cultural vacuum but are influenced by the belief systems that prevail in their respective societies’ (2016: 6) suggests at least some prepared ground to analyze journalists’ individual behaviors in relation to the anthropocentric belief system that excludes the nonhuman from considerations of inclusivity and justice within the remit of the media.

This is despite the fact that nonhuman animals are a part of our social world, and constantly appear within stories across media formats: from cute cat magazines to sports reporting to political battles over the hunting of foxes, to cross-cultural crises reporting on stories such as avian flu. News media frames remain anthropocentric, and place human concerns first. As Carrie P. Freeman (2015) found in her study of the U.S. media’s coverage of farmed animals, over 90 percent of coverage reinforced speciesism (the privileging of human concerns over that of nonhumans on species grounds alone) by objectifying those animals. While the other ten percent offered frames that considered animal welfare perspectives, as with Pendergrast (2015), these frames never extended to consider potential *rights* of the nonhuman animals, or human obligations towards the desire to live of nonhuman others.

The rise of Animal Journalism

However, there are pockets of journalism where the nonhuman animal’s concerns are considered as the subject of the story. Unlike the recognized beat of Environmental Journalism, Animal Journalism remains a relatively unknown concept. A Google search

returns only 993 results (compared to 201,000 for Environmental Journalism, or 950,000 for Political Journalism). There is no Wikipedia entry for the journalistic form.

Yet the idea of Animal Journalism having as its central concern the lives and wants of nonhuman animals is on the rise. In January 2014 a website, *thedodo.com*, launched aiming to become ‘the premier name in animal journalism’ (McHugh 2014). CEO and Editor of *The Dodo*, Kerry Lauerman, said that ‘the intersection of humankind and animals’ is the driving force behind the site: ‘We want to have a process, and talk about why we obsess over the animals that we do. What are the features that attract us to them, why do we have our reactions to them’ (quoted in McHugh 2014). At the time of writing, *The Dodo* has over 1.5million likes on Facebook.

The *Columbia Journalism Review* has also noted the media’s growing interest in how animals think and behave. As Sobel Fitts (2014) notes, this interest extends far beyond ‘silly memes featuring cute animals’—but often falls short of stepping outside of the anthropocentric frame; while sites such as BuzzFeed are ‘focusing animal coverage on how humans relate to animal feelings’, the human remains the focus. The audience, after all, will be human. This is not Animal Journalism, but a form of journalism about animals that continues to objectify along speciesist lines, with nonhumans discussed as the raw materials for foods and other products.

Two journalists who have spearheaded the concept of Animal Journalism to counter the anthropocentric nature of traditional journalism, are James McWilliams and Vickery Eckhoff. McWilliams freelances across a number of titles, is a historian and the author of several books. Eckhoff similarly writes across a number of mainstream journalism outlets. Together, in 2014, they established *The Daily Pitchfork*, a site dedicated to Animal Journalism. *The Pitchfork* aims to bring ‘accuracy and context to animal journalism’ and has established a set of guidelines borrowed ‘from the Society of Professional Journalists’ recently revised ethical guidelines, adapting them as needed to the coverage of animal issues.’⁸ As Eckhoff says on her website of her work, ‘I have an especial interest in animal journalism and its failure to treat animal issues and news that have animal connections to the highest journalistic standards of fact-finding.’ Or, as McWilliams (2014) puts it, ‘traditional journalism screws animals.’ In a post on his blog, McWilliams explores the backstory to a piece he wrote for Forbes.com on the fallout from the documentary *Blackfish*, which exposed allegations of cruelty, mistreatment and cover-ups by SeaWorld, the American-based entertainment group that keeps captive orca (killer whales) and other cetaceans. The original version of McWilliams’ article was

published without editorial input, and was soon the highest viewed story on the website. However, as McWilliams documents, for the first time during his Forbes.com tenure, he was asked to change the story to add ‘a) a quote from SeaWorld; b) another source to temper the anti-SeaWorld perspective of one of my sources; and c) the inclusion of empirical evidence suggesting that Sea World’s popularity was in fact not being harmed by *Blackfish*’s acclaim’ (2014). As he points out, ‘by the standards of journalistic convention, they weren’t necessarily unreasonable’ (Ibid.). And yet, as McWilliams concludes (he quit the role rather than amend his story), ‘making the requested changes would have legitimated the journalistic tactics that systematically prevent the inclusion of animal perspectives in the mainstream media [...] it has never been easier for conventional media to use the basic standards of “objective journalism” to exclude animal interests while furthering those who profit from their exploitation’ (Ibid.).

The work of McWilliams and Eckhoff can be seen as an example of what Hanitzsch, Hanusch and Lauerer have identified as journalistic interventionism. One form of such intervention (into political life) is to operate as ‘advocates’ for those without political voice or access to cultural resources. As Donsbach and Patterson (2004: 256) found, journalists work in ‘actively shaping, interpreting, or investigating political subjects [...] in a consistent, substantial and aggressive way.’ As Hanitzsch, Hanusch and Lauerer continue, journalistic advocacy is a form of intervention within public discourse that is not unknown within the media—indeed, in many countries, and particularly those in Asia, South America and Africa, advocacy journalism can be found within ‘normative concepts such as peace journalism and even more so in development(al) journalism, as well as civic or public journalism’ (2016: 3-4). However, they suggest ‘interventionism [...] is generally not a characteristic of Western journalistic cultures’ (4) perhaps partly in response to the wider autonomies and political freedoms experienced by journalists there, reducing the need for journalists to abandon other, powerful normative concepts such as ‘objectivity’ in their roles of influencing the political agenda and social change.

However, what McWilliams and Eckhoff demonstrate is that where freedoms for other animals do not exist, journalists who already have role orientations and world views that are inclusive of the wants and rights of nonhuman others, advocacy is not only desirable, but necessary. As McWilliams suggests, ‘any future in which animals have a genuine voice in the media will require reconceptualizing the meaning of responsible journalism’ (2014). We scholars and practitioners are in the position to reimagine the media to address this anthropocentric, therefore power-laden, relationship of journalism

to nonhuman concerns; this reimagination is being offered through critique by those working in the new field of Critical Media and Animal Studies, to which we now turn.

How journalism scholars can question anthropocentric frames

It is worth asking, in regards to the fact that so little study of journalism has attended to the nonhuman animal: is there, in fact, anything to study? There has been little historic interest to look at the ways journalism replicates and privileges anthropocentric discourses, or perhaps, as Animal Journalism is beginning to do, challenge and trouble that anthropocentric basis. A consideration of nonhuman animals as *subjects* with demands and desires, if not rights, within an inclusive society is missing from nearly all historical media and journalism studies scholarship. When nonhuman others are central to the stories critiqued, the analysis remains staunchly anthropocentric and blind to the naturalized ideologies of the ways in which the media helps subjugate the nonhuman (e.g. Charles 2004, 2012; Olesen 2008; Grunwald and Rupar 2015).

Exemplary in this manner is the work of Alec Charles, a journalist and journalism educator in the UK, who has produced scholarly work exploring the news media's engagement with stories about animals. For example, in his study (2012) of the media coverage of the hunting of a well-known and charismatic deer known as the Exmoor Emperor, Charles sees the animal's death as being implicated in the retelling of complex mythological narratives that speak not to the concerns of the nonhuman animal as subject, but the animal as cipher for these narratives to explore the problematic human affairs of nationalism, xenophobia and immigration. While Charles accurately and fairly portrays the ways in which journalists themselves see the death of the deer at the hands of an unknown, unnamed but probably 'rich foreigner' (51) and the suggestions that 'country pursuits—deerstalking, that kind of thing' (53) is natural territory for the media to cover, Charles never stops to consider what it might be to ask what this story means for the deer himself. Charles' tone, in this piece and an earlier one about squirrels (2004), is sardonic and dismissive, as if writing about the nonhuman is a trivial matter and one that needs to be leavened with wit. As Charles (2012: 59) says, 'The press coverage of the death of a deer may be *insignificant* in itself, but, in that it leads us towards further-reaching questions as to the formulation of media meanings, the discovery of significance within the ostensibly *insignificant* affords a perspective of some value and pertinence to a progressive and constructive notion of journalism and journalistic education' (emphasis added).

As this comment makes clear, Charles' work is situated so deeply within the normalized ideology of anthropocentrism that he cannot see outside the structures of power in which the media, and academia, operate when they naturalize the death of the nonhuman other. For Charles, the deer's death is meaningful only when it leads to further knowledge to do with the structures of human society. It is embarrassing for a journalist and academic to make such claims as 'the press might be seen as at their most influential, insofar as ideologies are most insidious when they are least visible' (58) and then to be blind to his own ideological stance in relation to the 'insignificance' of the death of the deer. Here, Charles practices his own unwitting transmission of 'the subliminal messages of power' to subordinate nonhuman animals to their 'outstanding position in the judicial, political, and moral orders' (Pick 2011: 15) as objects to be hunted.

The emerging field of Critical Animal Studies

There is, however, good news, for nonhumans, media researchers and journalism practitioners. A new field of scholarship has emerged that takes the subjective position of the nonhuman as central to questions of social inclusivity. That field is gathering under the title of Critical Animal and Media Studies (CAMS).

CAMS is, according to Núria Almiron and Matthew Cole (2015), co-editors of a new collection of essays with the same name, a convergence of two existing fields of scholarly enquiry, one of which itself is only recently established. These are 1) critical media studies, which has been operating for many decades, and 2) the relatively new critical animal studies, which explores the speciesist and anthropocentric systems of power that operate in maintaining human dominance over the nonhuman. As Almiron and Cole point out, while being critical of capitalism and intra-human oppressions and 'grounded on the critique of ideological domination and commitment to social justice' (2015: 2), critical media studies 'has tended to retain its anthropocentric standpoint' (Ibid.). Conversely, the field of critical animal studies has been slow to include journalism and media into its remit: a search of the *Animals Studies Journal* returns only two results with the search term 'journalism'. In bringing the two fields together, the editors 'aim to facilitate the introduction of debates on speciesism and the treatment of nonhuman animals into the heart of the agenda of critical media studies and to do the same regarding media and communications studies in the agenda of animal ethics researchers' (3). This desire is driven by the view that 'capitalistic media play a key role in the manufacturing of [speciesist consent] by not challenging or directly supporting the ideology that justifies

treating other species as we do' (1).

In their essay on the representations of urban foxes in UK newspapers, for example, Stewart and Cole (2015) model how anti-speciesist media scholarship could take shape, with the concerns of the lives of the foxes and the ways in which those lives are impacted by the media. Following the 2010 news story of a fox that allegedly entered their bedroom and attacked nine-month-old twins, Lola and Isabella Koupparis, Stewart and Cole tracked the news media's response, illustrating how the media reconstructed foxes as 'hostile and aggressive by virtue of their transgression of human social order' (135). They found a 'dramatic shift in media discourse [that] highlights the lethal fickleness of human meaning-making practices in relation to other animals' (136) and that has significance for the social ordering of the ways in which the nonhuman is framed. This is also the finding of McCrow-Young, Linné and Potts (2015: 29) in their study of the coverage of possums by the New Zealand print media who, they argue, 'promote an overwhelmingly negative representation of possums which influences cultural understandings and public attitudes – ultimately reproducing and reinforcing hatred, disrespect and maltreatment of possums as pests warranting extermination and undeserving of compassion.'

Here is where I return to the idea of sovereignty gestured towards earlier by Anat Pick, and more fully theorized in the political writings of Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka in their book *Zoographies*. I want to engage the ideas as laid out there of a reconceptualization of citizenship to extend to nonhuman others. If we are to take the place of nonhuman animals seriously and bring them into our concept of an inclusive society, which will lead to the borders of journalism expanding further to include nonhuman concerns, then a reconfigured idea of citizenship is a potential way to achieve this. As a journalist, writer and scholar who has written about the nonhuman world and human-animal encounters, what I want to do here is bring to the discussion a specific focus on Donaldson and Kymlicka's critique and reimagining of citizenship, and to look at how journalism can operate inclusively, leaving anthropocentric forms of ideologized power behind.

A political theory of citizenship to shape journalism for the animals

In questioning 'who wants a voice in science issues—and why?', An Nguyen and Steve McIlwane (2011) make no reference at all to the role that nonhuman animals are forced to play, through their subjugated and exploited roles as the objects of medical

testing and agricultural development, in the field of scientific discovery and the communication of science issues. This is despite drawing attention in their study to many of those issues, such as BSE, the cloning of animals, and climate change, that involve nonhuman others as centrally significant actors. Their study is focused determinedly on the desire of a human general public to have a voice in the debate and spreading of scientific knowledge, and does not ask, once, about the demands of the nonhuman animals involved—the slaughtered cattle, the cloned sheep—to be heard. It is without irony that Nguyen and McIlwane (2011: 211) suggest that: ‘without a voice in science discussion, citizens also find themselves without a voice in the larger political debate in which the scientific debate is embedded’ and so then double this disservice by refusing the nonhuman animal actors a voice as citizens, too.

What Nguyen and McIlwane unwittingly bring us back to is the key concept around which this exploration of an inclusive journalism for nonhumans may pivot: citizenship. At present, only humans are considered worthy of citizenship. But there are a number of conceptual arguments that extend the concept of citizenship to nonhuman animals, for the benefit not only of the nonhuman but for we humans too, in relation to our current exploitation of planetary resources. The question of what inclusive journalism might look like is then, in taking questions of inclusivity or exclusivity of membership in society seriously, a political question. As such, I conclude by turning to political theory for what it can help unpack from our relationship with nonhuman animals.

As the formation of the new academic journal *Politics and Animals* foregrounds, there has been an ‘animal turn’ within political theory that, as Tony Milligan (2015: 8) suggests, is responding to an ‘increased emphasis upon the tension between our treatment of animals and those liberal values which are supposed to govern political life in democratic societies’; liberal values such as inclusivity. In his overview of the current state of the ‘animal turn’ in political theory, Milligan gives significant attention to the work of Donaldson and Kymlicka, and in particular their book *Zoopolis*, which, they argue, offers ‘a new framework, one that takes “the animal question” as a central issue for how we theorize the nature of our political community, and its ideas of citizenship, justice, and human rights’ (2011: 1). These are the fundamental concerns of an inclusive society and mark the boundaries of what an inclusive journalism might also take to be its territory.

Donaldson and Kymlicka suggests that traditional animal rights theory has been based on negative rights and non-relationship: that is, animals should have freedom *from*

experiences (harm, exploitation) and should be left alone; and, they argue, animal rights theory has therefore failed to extrapolate the potential positive rights that are due to nonhuman others, as well as the riches of human-nonhuman relationships in companionship and beyond. This failure is damaging politically not only to nonhumans but also to human society, entrenched as it is in damaging practices that stem from anthropocentrism. They theorize a number of new *inclusive* frameworks for particular nonhuman groups. These are based on an expansion of the idea of citizenship. In essence, they debunk the human-only concept of citizenship to show that it can, and should, be extended to animals in positive relational rights:

Citizenship is about more than political agency, and political agency takes forms other than public reason. Citizenship has multiple functions, and all of them are, in principle, applicable to animals. Citizenship operates to allocate individuals to territories; to allocate membership in sovereign peoples; and to enable diverse forms of political agency (including assisted and dependent agency). Not only is it conceptually coherent to apply all three citizenship functions to animals, but we argue [...] that it is the only coherent way to make sense of our moral obligations. (61)

They propose that we recognize domesticated animals and those currently exploited for our food, clothing and products as citizens to whom we have positive relational rights; that we recognize wild animals as citizens of their own sovereign communities; and that we offer those liminal animals on the cusps of human-nonhuman environments, such as pigeons, a form of denizenship, which accepts their territorial rights but without co-opting them into the cooperative scheme of citizenship.

Milligan suggests that Donaldson and Kymlicka's reorientation of animal rights theory towards positive relational rights and active citizenship is both pragmatic and representative of a more coherent approach to animal rights. It is also one that in some ways sidesteps questions of anthropocentrism, because we do not yet have a word—they suggest *zoopolis*, taking account of the fact that *we are (human) animals too*—for the combined human-nonhuman citizenry that would emerge under their reconfiguration of society. The consideration of human and nonhuman concerns together may be the way our global crises can best be addressed, by political communities and by the media.

Conclusion: so what does a non-anthropocentric journalism look like?

The #PigGate scandal flared up again in April 2016 after it emerged that Prime Minister David Cameron had tried to tell a dirty joke about ‘rough sex on a farm’ to a Conservative Party team away day, and the news was leaked to the media.⁹ On Twitter and other social media sites the tag was used to ridicule Cameron. Perhaps this was welcome. As *Guardian* columnist Suzanne Moore wrote of the original story, the #PigGate storm was a hugely effective distraction to the main issue of austerity measures imposed by the government.¹⁰ Moore quotes Orwell’s *Animal Farm*: ‘The creatures looked from pig to man and from man to pig and it was impossible to say which was which’ as a way to communicate the *inhuman* behaviour of the government towards its fellow *humans* suffering the impact of budget cuts. Yet while Moore claims ‘our identification in this story is with the poor piggy’ not once does she pay attention to the treatment of the pig, nor refrain from making her own wordplay on the pig’s situation.

A non-anthropocentric journalism *would* refrain from such speciesist language and arguments; would consider the dignity of the animal, even if already dead and processed into foodstuff; and would, as Donaldson and Kymlicka put it, take into account, as all journalists should by now, ‘the simple fact is that the human species cannot survive on this planet if we do not become less dependent on the exploitation of animals, and destruction of their habitat’ (2011: 253). That is, the original treatment would have given the dead pig her automatic citizenship rights, and not objectified her as a sexual/food object. The journalism would have respected our ‘positive relational rights’ to the deceased animal, and been incensed that an individual (Cameron) had transgressed these rights. When all these anthropocentric blind spots are added up, it is clear that journalism is failing in its role as the fourth estate, to the point of being inconsequential, if it does not include the concerns of nonhumans, and human-nonhuman relationships, within its remit.

In her conclusion to *Critical Animal and Media Studies*, Freeman (2015a: 267) argues that the ‘news media is not fulfilling its role as a diverse public forum if it is (uncritically) promoting a speciesist worldview, without acknowledging it as an unfair bias.’ Freeman and Merskin having already established a well-thought through and comprehensive rubric for the coverage of animals in journalism to move away from anthropocentric frames.¹¹ With the rise of a specific form of Animal Journalism making the case for animal concerns to be the subject of stories, and with the emergence of a CAMS scholarship interested in studying *and changing* the ways that nonhumans are involved and implicated in journalism’s agenda, we have the beginnings of a challenge to

the hegemonic anthropocentrism at the heart of our media.

At best, journalism serves the citizens of societies to inform and educate and to hold power to account. If the above stories were rewritten and treated within a form of journalism that was inclusive to nonhuman animals as members of its concerned citizenship, there would be no dismissive and derisory comments about vegetarianism, and the myopia over the causes of climate change would be challenged; indeed, the journalist would be shaken by the consideration of not only human habits, but also nonhuman concerns about animal flesh. However, from the perspective of political economy, all of this will not take place within the institutional structures of mainstream, traditional journalism filled with professional practitioners who continue to consume meat and use animal products, and is owned by individuals and shareholders who do the same. The future for a non-anthropocentric journalism, in the short term at least, lies in the entrepreneurship of new digital journalistic practices driven by low barriers to entry and vegan and/or non-anthropocentric ethical beliefs of those producing the journalism. Examples include *The Dodo*, but also the new range of vegan lifestyle magazines that have emerged in the last five years. The growth of vegan life practices has also led to traditional forms of media opening their gates to vegan writers and issues.

A fully inclusive, non-anthropocentric journalism will not merely go beyond puns and pithy hashtags, nor satisfy itself with reporting what animals mean for *us*. A non-anthropocentric journalism ensures that nonhuman others are, critically, included within who journalists view as *citizens* or *denizens* with various positive relational rights, including the right to representation and advocates, or to be left alone. This non-anthropocentric journalism constantly questions society's current insidious anthropocentric worldview. As media scholars, we must do the same.

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¹ For example, see <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2011/06/anim-j10.html>

² The term ‘shoe leather reporting’ refers to a traditional, feet-on-the-beat form of journalism where journalists find their stories by going out and speaking to people from within their communities rather than sitting behind a desk, and the speciesist nature of the phrase refers to but elides that it is a dead cow’s skin that forms the soles of most mass-produced shoes

³ The phrase is credited to *Washington Post* editor Philip Graham, although that is disputed, see http://primary.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/press_box/2010/08/who_said_it_first.html

⁴ Papers studied included: *The Times*, *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *i*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Express*, *The Sun*, *The Star*, *The Mirror*

⁵ The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations’ current working estimate is 14.5 percent of greenhouse gas emissions from animal agriculture, see www.fao.org/3/i3437e.pdf

⁶ See <http://www.brandchannel.com/2016/02/03/guardian-the-campaign-minute-020316/>

⁷ Cecil the lion lived in the Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe, and was a major attraction to visitors before being shot on a hunt by the American Walter Palmer. The ensuing outcry forced Palmer from his home and work. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killing_of_Cecil_the_lion

⁸ See http://dailypitchfork.org/?page_id=33

⁹ See <http://www.thecanary.co/2016/04/19/david-ferguson-bombs-spectacularly-with-a-joke-about-rough-sex-on-a-farm/>

¹⁰ See <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/21/david-ferguson-piggate-sideshow-dead-pig>

¹¹ See <http://www.animalsandmedia.org/main/>