"You Have Blood On Your Lips" — Experiencing and Articulating Animal-Related Violence in Veganism

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Abstract
This article outlines critical research perspectives on the human-animal relationship. It uses exemplary analyses of empirical data collected through qualitative interviews with vegans to shed light on how they perceive certain ways of treating animals as violent practices. The analysis in this article focuses on the functions and effects of language, not only in terms of its role in maintaining existing carnivorous structures and practices, but also in terms of dynamic processes and potentials for change. This approach presupposes a notion of structural and symbolic violence. Specifically, this study examines how the vegan research partners perceive, experience, and articulate carnivorous dietary and consumption practices as violence against so-called farm animals. The analysis shows that images are highly significant, namely in the context of figurative language, when talking about images and with regard to one's own iconic imaginaries. The (linguistically co-determined) construction of closeness to and distance from the animal product offers important insights into the socio-cultural and psycho-social dimensions of an animal-related "vegan" understanding of violence and harm.

Keywords
veganism, human-animal relationship, proximity-distance, image, symbolic-structural violence

Animal-Related Violent Practices in the Discourse of Knowledge: Sensitisation, Visualisation, Articulation and Analysis

Dealing with animals has always been an important part of human practice. The varied use and consumption of certain animals is part of a tradition that goes back thousands of years. At the same time, the development of vegetarianism can be traced in a cultural-historical and intercultural perspective — for example, in Jainism and Buddhism or in the "life-reform" (*Lebensreform*) movement of late 19th-century and early 20th-century in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland (for an example, see Schwarz, 2005). Central to this article is the subsequent recourse to the domestication of animals, their *processing* in industrial factory farming and the normalisation of animal consumption, but especially the focus on deviant practices of vegan diets and lifestyles in *Western* societies. In this context, a strong critique of social conditions is elaborated — especially of the keeping and killing of animals for food and consumption — and examined with regard to the complete renunciation of animal products in the form of veganism.

A critical perspective is also being sharpened in social science research on human-animal relations (Brucker et al., 2015) and interdisciplinary research fields such as *Human-Animal-Studies*.

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It sensitises to the fact that the focus on the study of past, existing, and possible future human-animal relations always implies notions of violence or non-violence as well as the interwoven legitimisation or even critique of violence against (certain) animals. Birgit Mütherich (2015) emphasises deeply embedded imprints of a human-animal dualism in culture, which go hand in hand with a clear self-valorisation of humans. Here, the devalued animal thereby functions as the *completely* or *radical "other"* and is characterised by its closeness to nature and its lack of reason, a trait that is attributed exclusively to man. Such attributions are anchored in language, symbols, myths, rituals, and norms, as well as "in the collective unconscious and the action-guiding depths of occidental culture that remains irreflexive" (Mütherich, 2015, p. 51). This social construction is naturalised and thus acquires an unquestioned validity. Differentiations and demarcations by mean of linguistic practices that place animals (across species) in a demarcation line to humans are addressed in various approaches (for a more in-depth discussion, see Lind, 2022; Nübling, 2022; Späth, 2022). For example, Lena Späth (2022) notes a linguistic tendency to homogenise and obscure the differences between humans and animals, which cements a rigid boundary between humans and animals — despite different modes of functioning, patterns of relationships, and internal variations. This has a lasting impact on the ways in which people perceive animals and engage with them. On this basis, there is sometimes critical reflection on the extent to which the conceptual differentiation between *human animals* and *non-human animals* should be used instead (Lind, 2022; Wiedenmann, 2002).

Both ethnolinguistically anchored practices of demarcation, along with their critical reflection in the discourse of knowledge are closely interwoven with historical developments that shape the relationships and bonds between animals and humans as well as human distancing from their animate environment. References to Christianity, the Enlightenment, and humanism help to reconstruct the influences of a rationalised dissociation of humans from animals (as exemplified by Mütherich, 2015; Späth, 2022). Furthermore, the emergence of spatial segregation during industrialisation regarding the rearing, killing, and processing of used animals is noteworthy. This ties in with Norbert Elias' remarks on shame and embarrassment in civilised society and the increasingly shameful and disgusting outsourcing of killed animals "behind the scenes of social life" (Elias, 1982, p. 419; see also Thieme, 2015; Buschka et al., 2013). An examination of power and domination through a critical analysis of historical developments is suitable for studying (de)subjectivation practices that revolve around the categorical classification of humans and animals. Mütherich (2015) clarifies that the selective and hierarchical perception of animals has not been scrutinised from an inequality or power-theoretical perspective in the social sciences for a long time. As a result, the analysis of violent structures in sociology is clearly limited since it does not address violence against animals, not even when it is interconnected with other violent human relationships. Moreover, because of this deficit, sociology plays a shared part in constructing and perpetuating a violent differentiation as well as the notion of a rationale that bears similarities with the legitimisation of power-based devaluations of certain social groups. Animals face a similar fate as certain humans who are deemed inferior, stigmatised, discriminated against, and in worst cases persecuted and exterminated by certain groups and their members.

In order to analyse these interconnections of violent and harmful relations, it is first necessary to make accessible violent practices in human-animal relations both in general and in the context of normalised ways of dealing with so-called farm animals. In order to grasp the specificity of animal-related relations of violence and oppression, scholarly discussion has taken up the concept of *speciesism* (Ryder, 1983). The assumption that animals can feel and suffer is a basic prerequisite for further considerations. It is crucial that socio-critical perspectives and the discussion of violent structures and practices distance themselves from a metaphysically based understanding of (anti-)speciesism. Speciesism and the critique of this belief system are historical and cultural phenomena (for more on this, see Rude, 2013) and are closely interwoven with other ideologies that legitimise exploitation, violence, and oppression: "We do not exploit animals because we consider them inferior, but we consider animals inferior because we exploit them" (Mauritzi, 2012, cited in Rude, 2013, p. 183). This close connection to social relations of production is also taken up by Buschka, Gutjahr, and Sebastian (2013). They illustrate how linguistically supported, institutionalised violence against animals is neutralised and sustainably stabilised in the process. They point to processes of distancing, normalisation, and rationalisation that produce this neutralisation. (1.) With distancing, the authors capture (linguistically co-constituted) mechanisms and practices that create distance from the animal. The perception of the animal as an individual would be blocked, leading not only to anonymisation but also to a reification of living beings. Euphemisms or the separation of body and product (Adams, 1990) are central. (2.) Normalisation refers to the fact that animal-related

forms of violence are obscured by normative and normalising processes — a sensitisation or irritation for these violent practices is blocked. It is important to note here that this neutralisation is directed at existing violence against *particular* animals. (3.) The authors conceive rationalisation as rationalisation processes and a related diffusion of responsibility through routinisation and dissection of actions. Furthermore, rationalisation strategies to love animals while still eating them are located here. This is also negotiated in the context of the so-called meat paradox (see Bastian & Loughnan, 2017; Frank, 2017) which focuses on the reduction of cognitive dissonance when individuals become aware of the role their consumption of animal products plays in animal suffering — and react with defiance.

In addition to the (linguistic) demarcation of humans from animals, it is precisely these existing ambivalences of numerous perceptions of animals that open up critical approaches. In particular, the (categorically determined) ambivalence between pets and farm animals is to be mentioned here. On the one hand, animals are regarded as *beloved subjects* while on the other hand, they are categorised, downgraded, and devalued as *anonymised, reified creatures* (e.g., Buschka et al., 2013; Joy, 2013, 2017; Mütherich, 2015; Pollack, 2009; Rude, 2013). Melanie Joy's (2013, 2017) reflections on the legitimisation, plausibilisation, and rationalisation of animal consumption open up a connectable perspective. Joy categorises a system of carnism from a social psychological perspective as a normalised ideology of violence that she considers irrational. She highlights *three N's* that categorise and justify the use and consumption of animal products as *normal, necessary, and natural* (to which *Nice* is added in Piazza et al., 2015). Through this justification, a carnivorous system could not only be institutionally maintained and structurally anchored, but also internalised and incorporated by individuals. Veganism as a counter-system would stand in an oppositional relationship to these stabilised *self-evident facts*, thus being clearly labelled and therefore in need of legitimisation itself. Veganism is embedded in a social power imbalance that tries to hide the existence of a vegan minority. Stereotyping and stigmatisation contribute to the degradation of veganism as a *peculiar* trend or cult. Joy's view of a minority existence of vegans can be questioned. The consumption of animals and its renunciation are increasingly becoming conscious choices. Also, the omnipresence of vegan products in the supermarkets or marketing strategies such as the *Veganuary* show the growing acceptance of *trying* a vegan diet at least occasionally. It is also interesting that Joy makes the suppression of compassion towards animals — which is understood as essential — a prerequisite of her considerations. By using phrases like "waking up from the matrix" (Joy, 2017, p. 95), the normative and universalising aspects of her perspective become clear. Here, she inscribes the notion of an illusory and simulated reality of animal consumption. For a recognition of reality, there is only one way out: "Learn what the world would look like through vegan eyes" (Joy, 2017, p. 94).

In the critical analysis of the human-animal relationship presented here, one can identify a focus on the symbolic and structural dimensions of violence (Bourdieu 1977, 1990, 1991, 2002; also discussed in Gudehus & Christ, 2013) — in the sense of neutralisation (Buschka et al., 2013) or desensitisation of violence (Bauman, 1996). In this context, symbolic-linguistic entrenchments and structural anchors are brought into view — and subjected to critique. The understanding of critique in this article spans two dimensions and refers to cultural psychology as an integrative perspective (Chakkarath & Straub, 2020; Straub & Chakkarath, 2019). Here, critique can be understood as immanent to culture (Boesch, 2000) and cultural psychology can be seen as immanent critique, reminding us that where people act, they can act differently (Balandis & Niebel, 2018). However, how people act and which patterns of meaning and significance can be reconstructed is analysed in the course of interpretative procedures — in the context of an *understanding through comparison* (Straub, 2010, 2022). Therefore, it can be argued: Where people consider the consumption and utilisation of animal products as normal, natural, and necessary (Joy, 2013, 2017), *refraining* from it can also be understood as normal, natural, and necessary; furthermore, the absence of these abstentions can be viewed as potential practices of violence (for the action-theoretical location of refraining, see Straub, 1999). The *how* of reconstruction is central. This example shows Ernst Boesch's (2000) concept of critique being inherent to culture and how this connects the critical individual to her or his culture. Boesch suggests that despite the critic's inclination to challenge his culture by means of his own convictions and assessments, he has acquired these as well as the tools for confrontation through the cultural compound (Boesch, 2000, p. 45). This becomes clear in the concept of renunciation, which has to be seen in relation to the normalisation of animal consumption.

The recourse to ambivalences — in the perception of pets and farm animals — is an important approach (while these categories may show some cross-cultural variation with regard to which animal is considered a pet or a farm animal). But also, the co-existence of vegan lifestyles and the normalisation of animal consumption become contrasting foils; as such they sensitise and bring consumption and food practices to the fore that are perceived as violent practices. Furthermore, critique is understood not only as normatively occupied but also as symbolically mediated (Boesch, 2000, 2006). This can be outlined by assuming that compassion is suppressed and *unlearned* through the internalisation and embodiment of an ideology of violence, as exemplified by Joy (2013, 2017). In a cultural-psychological perspective, the focus of the investigation is not the unlearning of compassion, but the psychosocial and sociocultural dimensions of *how* compassion is created, directed, or even suppressed in the first place — and how violence and harm are articulated and experienced in relation to it. Moreover, not only cognitive and rational dimensions are relevant but also affective-emotional aspects — entirely along the line of an understanding of affective sociality or rather social affectivity, which takes up the central cultural-psychological conviction of an interconnectedness of culture and psyche (cf., Chakkarath & Straub, 2020; Pfaller & Wiesse, 2018). For example, experiences of pleasure and taste as well as disgust and revulsion are highly significant in this context. They draw attention not only to personal preferences in the choice of specific diets, but also point to different modes in which tacit knowledge can have an impact on our actions. What someone consumes or does not consume and how it is done, is linked to questions of social affiliation and social distinction. This illustrates habitual imprints that need to be considered in their complexity, especially in the process of becoming vegan. Imaginations are also considered important with regard to their world-enclosing power and their function within ethical orientations (Cooke, 2009). This is quite central to the following presentation of some of my empirical results.

Empirical Approaches: Experiencing and Articulating Violence Against Animals in Veganism
When sketching critical perspectives on the human-animal relationship, the recourse to symbolic and structural dimensions in the understanding of violence is key. Language constantly reproduces violent relations between humans and animals that are deeply manifested in culture — and thereby neutralises or even veils them. However, it is above all the resistance inherent in language (Straub, 2022), or the ambiguity that symbolic reference systems generally exhibit, that opens up access to individual, but also social processes of change. It is precisely in an understanding of the heterogeneity of culture (Chakkarath & Straub, 2020), which takes into account the existence of subcultures and the diversity of social relations, that the potential for an awareness of contingency and the potential for an exploration of the complex forms of its limitation lies. The question, then, is to what extent normalised practices of animal consumption are interpreted and mediated as practices of violence. Veganism as a dietary and life practice is an interesting research field to investigate vis-à-vis how violence against animals is articulated. In addition to analysing articulation of violence in this specific field, my research perspective also focuses on the *experience* of violence. The relevance of affects and emotions, of moods and atmospheres (for the atmospheric as an environmental reference, see Boesch, 2021) in their power to access but also to hermetically seal the world is thereby also considered (cf., Slaby et al., 2011; see also Rosa, 2016, on resonance and alienation). In this context, a hermeneutic, interpretive-comparative approach is central to reconstructing what is said and also what is unspoken but said between the lines of the self-narratives. This is evident in the interviews, for example, when people talk about *strange atmospheres* or swinging moods that cannot be captured precisely in language. In some of the interviews, there is also talk of *feeling physical violence on one's own body*. It should be emphasised that my understanding of language sees it as limited in its possibilities, also with regard to its access to affect, to affirming atmospheres or — as will be addressed below — to aversions. This is true for (1.) language in its affirmative potential (also in the interview situation itself); it is true for (2.) the affectively charged way of *how* people speak, and for (3.) the fact that we are not dealing with affects themselves but with a people talking *about* affects. Affects and emotions are highly significant for the reconstruction of self- and world-relations (Boesch, 2006; Joas, 1999; Straub, 2017), even if these aspects can only be partially included in the following analysis.

It should be noted that veganism, is a polyvalent phenomenon (Boesch, 2000, 2006). From a dietary perspective, veganism can be defined as the most consistent vegetarian variant. Vegans who are also called *strict vegetarians* are considered strict in that *no* products from animals are consumed (Leitzmann & Keller, 2013). Vegans exclusively consume plant-based food while

they reject all food of animal origin, including honey or foods colored with dye from scale insects. In addition, vegans do not use utensils or materials of animal origin (Leitzmann & Keller, 2013, p.22). Deviations from this ideal-typical definition deviations are to be considered in terms of content and its arrangement; however, an extended degree of selection is an important structural characteristic. Studies on a health-motivated eating style (Leitzmann & Keller, 2013), lifestyle characteristics (Grube, 2009) of a vegan community — including scene-specific aspects as, for example, in diverse youth-cultures (Hitzler & Niederbacher, 2010; Rinas, 2012; Schwarz, 2005) — or the focus on vegan forms of animal rights activism with political claims (Rude, 2013) may serve as illustrations. In my current research project, I am primarily interested in the ethical-moral manifestation of veganism. For this field of research, it is essential that vegan beliefs and practices are not understood as optional by their adherents, but as obligatory and that they are committed to preparing the public and disseminating veganism in society. The forms of commitment are manifold and range from political work over public protest actions; both active and passive support of animal right organisations through membership or signing of petitions; the joint organisation of vegan (info-) meetings; a professional commitment against animal testing; the establishment and maintenance of animal sanctuaries; the offering of vegan products on the market; or *artivism* as a special form of activism in the arts. Even the (mere) change of one's own eating and consumption habits is repeatedly emphasised with regard to its role model function within one's own social environment.

Empirical material has already been collected and analysed. A total of fifteen interviews are available, conducted between 2015 and 2023. In addition to individual interviews, two couple interviews (cf., Wimbauer & Motakef, 2017) and one family interview were collected. Following the premises from the narrative autobiographical interview (Schütze, 1983), a central concern was to align the interview situation with the criterion of openness. In addition to a narration-generating stimulus, guiding questions were occasionally asked. The data were analysed using a procedure, taken from relational hermeneutics (Straub, 2010), for which a deep sequential and comparative approach to analysis is significant.

For the purpose of this article, excerpts from a comprehensive individual case reconstruction (Sue[1]) are outlined in more detail and used for a systematic comparison in relation to the experience and articulation of violence against animals. Exemplary, cross-case references to other interviews (Maja, Flo, and Ben) are made every now and then to substantiate both contrasts and transsubjective condensations in the material.

The Semantic Network of Articulating Violence Against Animals
The basis for an insight into the results of the individual case reconstruction is an interview with a young woman (Sue), which was conducted in the summer of 2019. The interview has a total length of 2 hours and 55 minutes. Here, extremely complex, and condensed, important dimensions of an understanding of a violence against (farm) animals emerge. In the following, they will be fanned out and elaborated with regard to their relevance across cases. It should be noted that identity-relevant aspects (Straub, 2019) and especially the biographical development curve (Schütze, 1983) must always be considered. Although, these are not the focus of this article, they are mentioned at various points as starting points of the analysis; while they cannot be reconstructed in their full complexity, they are central with regard to aspects such as (a struggle for) credibility, agency, and recognition. The understanding of violence against animals — as explained below — refers to complex functionalities, attributions, and agreements regarding responsibility as well as (communicative) opening and closing processes. Special attention is paid to linguistically constructed contexts of meaning. In particular, the relationship between proximity and distance (to animals, animal products, and fellow humans) plays an important role. Sue connects to a given narrative stimulus as follows:

> Well then, SO it began with the fact that I decided, at the age of 16, to become a vegetarian, so uh, I have been a vegetarian for almost twenty years before I then became a vegan (inhale). I finally became a vegan, simply uh (inhale), for consistency one could say (I: mmh). Because at the tender age of 16, I decided to become a vegetarian for ethical reasons, because I personally

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[1] The *names of the interview partners listed below are pseudonyms.

found it a contradiction to claim that I love animals and still eat their dead bodies, so I found that somehow very contradictory to say the least (I: mmh) (heavy breath). And, um, when then in the course of the years, increasingly (.), so when I've been given more and more information, when I also saw a lot about, um, (inhale) PETA, for example, footage or video material, I was also deeply shocked, so I really sat, um, sometimes crying, in front of the PC, because I was very taken, looking at all this cruelty and brutality (inhale). And, um, well it — it's also because I'm simply a very empathetic person. I, um, (I: mmh), (inhale) due to my empathy, I am, of course, logically, yes, literally very compassionate (I: yes) and if I then put myself in the position of the animals, imagining, one would treat me and my family in such a way (inhale), in such a way, as the animals are treated, I find that simply just cruel (inhale). (Sue, 2019, lines 10–27)

In the following sections, I will reconstruct some aspects that frame the experience and articulation of a violence against animals and how they are relevant across sequences and cases.

Process of Becoming Vegan: The Demands of Consistently Renouncing Animal Products to Avoid Complicity in Animal Suffering.
An essential common feature that the empirical survey shows is first of all a process of becoming vegan — as we also saw in Sue's case. All interviewees consumed animal products in the past. A vegan diet from birth onwards is conceivable (especially due to the increasing prevalence of veganism) but does not appear in the sample. In all cases, the decision to become vegan was initiated by complex ethical-moral considerations that are closely interwoven with an understanding of non-violence. This relationality of violence and morality is also articulated in Herzog's (2018, p. 297) observation that both violence and morality mark the sociality of man; the former in the negative, the latter in the positive. In this respect, morality essentially extends to the regulation of interpersonal interaction.

Veganism as a dietary and lifestyle practice itself assumes a morally constitutive function that points to the intrinsic connection between morality and action (Straub, 1999; Thrun, 2020). While this can generally be applied to food cultures in general as well as to various forms of commensality and the associated moral charge of food-related commandments and prohibitions, its morally constitutive function becomes especially explicit in the field of tension between carnivorous and vegetarian-vegan diets. In his reflections on meatless and meaty diets, Winter (2023, p. 11) clarifies to what extent meat consumption or meat rejection is seen as a *contested topic* and a social *field of conflict* which is to be examined against the background of a general change in nutrition (Winter, 2023, with a reference to Brunner, 2008). Closely interwoven with these aspects are social affiliation and distinction. The interviewees' self-narratives and their sometimes metaphorical elaborations need to be seen as efforts to access different levels of meaning in veganism and its not purely rational, but also affective-emotional dimensions. They connect to shared knowledge, but also show gradual spaces of freedom and potential for modification. They provide information about the processing of blind spots and tense situations, but also about the maintenance of ambivalences (e.g., regarding inner tensions and conflicts). Maintaining and reflecting one's own moral integrity becomes a central aspect in Sue's narrative. She relates moral integrity strongly to the consequences of one's actions, which must be constantly weighed for consistency with one's own value system. Sue emphasises her strong sense of empathy and responsibility for the suffering of animals in factory farming, which ultimately led to a consistent abstinence from animal products and will continue to do so throughout her life. Her self-image as a vegan is linked to notions of her own authenticity, which would be undermined by inconsistencies in her actions (and justify her turning away from the kind of vegetarianism that she had practiced for years). As an integrating element of moral considerations and convictions, responsibility is an important concept for accessing perceived practices of violence. A critique of speciesism ties in with this and will be discussed in more detail below.

Social Critique of Speciesism: Crossing the Borders Between Critical-Reflexive and Emotional-Affirmative Lines of Argumentation

I have already briefly addressed the critique of speciesism. It can also be found in the empirical data across cases. The assumption and attribution of responsibility is striking. We can reconstruct not only lines of rational argumentation, but also (linguistically co-constituted) affective ties and blockades. Metaphors provide an important access to the connotative level of narrations (Straub, 2022). Boesch (2006) speaks of a *metaphorical reality of experience* which refers to a network of meanings that shape experience and the perception of reality. Sue's narrative begins with a critique of the power relationship between humans and animals. She emphasises her own solidarity with the helpless creature that has no voice in the discourse. She raises human responsibility and the duty of care to a normative level and articulates her profound shock at the human failure to adhere to these standards (Sue, 2019, line 468f). Another interviewee, Ben, also clarifies the extent to which he understands animal welfare as the obligatory responsibility of humans towards animals. He emphasises the power of humans provided by their strength and foresight and appeals not to abuse it, but to use it prudently and morally (Ben, 2019, line 321ff). He contrasts this duty of care with normalised societal practices in which animals are exploited, tested, eaten, and thus not recognised for their value (Ben, 2019, line 313f).

In all interviews, the rationality of a normalised consumption of animals is disputed. This criticism of the irrationality of the practice of violence can also only be reproduced here in fragments. It is central to make this practice of violence recognisable and perceptible as such in the first place. Sue, for example, speaks of an "illusory world" (Sue, 2019, line 1125) of her non-vegan fellow humans and of a "consciously bought illusion" (Sue, 2019, line 260). She repeatedly emphasises the inconsistencies that would strike her in their arguments. For example, if they were to say to their justification: "Yeah, but I just eat very little meat." She elaborates: "Then I think to myself: Is this supposed to be an argument? If I were to say: 'Well, sometimes I eat a little bit of human flesh,' then people would be totally horrified" (Sue, 2019, line 531ff). What emerges here is an argumentative affection or an afflicting argument that serves to deconstruct the normality of animal consumption and to show it in its inconsistency. The means of shock and the breaking of taboos are central here — interestingly, however, only in thought and not out loud in recurring situations that are just narratively re-actualised. In the context of perceived and ascribed responsibilities, the affective-emotional dimensions of the lines of argumentation become even clearer. In Sue's case, a field of tension opens up: On the one hand, she strongly criticises the lack of responsibility of her (non-vegan) fellow human beings — and compares, for example, organic bio-products with modern versions of medieval "indulgencies" (Sue, 2019, line 260). Sometimes, this criticism is affectively charged by figures of speech such as "[y]ou have blood on your lips" (ibid., line 743). In analogy to "[y]ou have blood on your hands", the incorporation of animal parts is morally charged and criminalised. Here, too, accountability is located at the level of consumption and nutrition. Later in a sequence, Sue employs cruelty against animals as a trait of psychopathy, which reinforces the aspects of pathologisation and criminalisation. There is a tension that arises from one's own sense of tolerance and awareness of contingency, also from an attitude of wanting to recognise deviant ways of life. Sue partially resolves this tension by clarifying that most people do not intend animal suffering but that that the cruelty goes unnoticed due to ignorance. This becomes the basis for a rationalised critique of a certain naivety or ignorance on the part of her fellow humans, implying a need to come to terms with one's own values and morals in order to reconcile them with one's own past and present actions. Reflecting on one's own non-vegan past ("I used to think like that, too, like: Oh God, I could never live without cheese", Sue, 2019, line 1072) becomes a marker of contingency (after all, I am able to live without cheese) and its limitation (I do not want to ever do it differently again). Thus, Sue, on the one hand, (1.) justifies her devotion to veganism, but at the same time (2.) elevates it to the status of a universal claim. The construction of meaning and significance in self-narratives inherently involves the relation between past, present and future (Straub, 2022; Boesch, 2000, 2006). Therefore, it is crucial to evaluate how one's own previous animal consumption is re-evaluated and related to one's current vegan lifestyle. In Sue's case, it is striking that on the one hand, she sometimes speaks of the remorse of her late insight (Sue, 2019, line 36ff); and on the other, she proudly talks about how her former consumption of meat and cheese (Sue, 2019, line 1070ff, 1611ff) became a benchmark of a (radical) self-transformation. The change in one's own experience of pleasure and taste becomes the projection surface of a mastery of one's own desires and their redirection. The new passion is veganism, a passion that, however, also involves suffering. Personal pleasure must sometimes be

subordinated to one's own moral standards, including one's vegan convictions. However, Sue repeatedly points to new ways of experiencing one's own tastes and deconstructs renunciation explicitly. At the same time, the empirical material shows that a successful construction effort is highly significant in order to maintain a vegan life practice, that is, to cope with an inherent fragility. In addition to analogisation strategies at the level of social negotiation, the internalisation of figurative impressions and their retrieval through imaginaries also plays an important role. Sue highlights that cruel images would haunt her (Sue, 2019, line 1621). This includes questions of one's own shame and guilt, which are (and have to be) recalled again and again within the vegan lifestyle. More about this later.

Sue's narrative is riddled not only with analogisations but also with gradual reinterpretations, which are also found in other interviews. Not only the conviction that veganism is able to assert itself in the future and within a majority can be reconstructed, but also the sustainable consolidation of one's own vegan self-image and worldview. It is not only about convincing fellow human beings of the potentials of veganism, but also of questions of one's own visibility and recognition. The empirical data shows that Sue struggles with stereotypical (vegan) images. These are manifested, among other things, in a denial of Sue's authenticity: an *explicit silence* becomes a central issue within the self-narrative. At times, Sue uses rationalisation strategies in order to withstand a critical examination of her vegan self-image and to dismiss insinuations of its invalidity. Social lines of conflict between vegans and non-vegans are addressed in many interviews but weighted and processed differently. Of course, internal conflicts also play a role. Here, it is not possible to outline the complex formations that are in play, but overall, this opens up an exciting perspective on the relevance of important interrelationships: with regard to the (perceived) attacks against one's own (vegan) self and different defense strategies; to dimensions of (perceived) powerlessness and empowerment; to questions of (moral) accusation and the associated own vulnerability. Exciting are questions of habitualised taste that reveal the limits of purely rational argumentation. They are answered in a particular way, as will become apparent.

Overall, the falsification of specific knowledge stocks is an important trace that emerges in various narratives. Here, the connection to knowledge related discourses, the deconstruction of valid knowledge, and its reinterpretation into new and connectable moral imperatives is central. A critique of speciesism becomes the basis for uncovering humanity's double standards as well as ambivalences in human behaviour and action. Turning to vegan practice is seen as an effective way to resolve these ambivalences and moral conflicts. Categories of normality, rationality, (physical and mental) health, truth, reason, and law are used, tested for their limits, re-interpreted and morally charged to justify a turn away from animal consumption. Ben's reflections on humanity suffering from a lack of compassion and connectedness are also worth mentioning (Ben, 2019, line 951f). Argumentative segments of the narratives are imbued with truth claims and highlight the potency of veganism: as a possibility that is at the same time a necessity. Contingency is limited in a specific way, and it is emphasised that there is a universally realisable potential of vegan patterns of thought and action. Here, sovereignties of interpretation are inscribed, and at the same time credibility is distinguished from untrustworthiness. The interviews reveal a *point of no return* — a biographical turning point that is closely intertwined with the normative claims outlined above. This is semantically charged in different ways. While Sue speaks of a "eureka moment" (Sue, 2019, line 826) distinguishing herself from people who go through their "(make-believe) world" with blinders on (Sue, 2019, line 224, 1237, 1950, 1125), others also use metaphors of enlightenment and revival. For example, Ben speaks of events that "flipped the switch" (Ben, 2019, line 107ff, 136, 388ff, 413) and provided "illumination" (Ben, 2019, line 803). He emphasises the importance of impulse givers (Ben, 2019, line 32), which led him to veganism. This also shapes his own moralising efforts in the long term (for details, see Thrun, 2020) — he wants to flip a switch in fellow human beings so that they also see the light (Ben, 2019, line 388f). This is very close to Joy's reflections on "waking up from the matrix" (Joy, 2017, p. 95). The convictions that are systematised and inscribed in these statements refer to religious-spiritual as well as political and biographically relevant levels of meaning. Transparency versus non-transparency, *seeing what others do not (yet) see but should see* plays an essential role. However, this foresight, which Ben, for example, attests to himself, can become a gateway for communicative disturbances and profound conflicts in social relationships. An important related dimension that can be reconstructed in the material across cases is the relevance of imagery,

which is conveyed in its disillusioning function, but also in its emotionalising and stressful effects. One of the interviewees, Flo, agitatedly notes:

> IF ONE HAS REALLY seen this once, if you watch the film (groan) "Earthlings" or so, then (sniff), well, I haven't done it, I've watched these, um video clips (heavy inhale), completely disdained "Earthlings", but I — actually, everything is so clear then, right. Once you see it, then it's just a question of how consistent you are in everyday life (inhale). (Flo, 2019, lines 303–308)

(Shock) Images as Testimonies of Violence Against Animals

In the course of the research, it became clear that imagery and image practices are of central importance in the context of the appropriation and dissemination of veganism. The use of images, for example, in social networks or as part of any act of showing in the field of the political or within epistemic practices (Scholz, 2021), merits some interest. Images provide insights into the processes and structures of factory farming and are disseminated, for example, as *shock images* via social networks in order to make the hidden suffering of so-called farm animals visible. Shock images are constituted by a moment of irritation. Reemtsma (1993) describes this (shocking) experience of irritation as a "reaction to an unexpected, unheard-of event (...) in the face of which familiar forms of perception and processing prove inadequate" (Reemtsma, 1993, p. 9; Bauman, 1996, p. 40). Shock images are subject to a potential process of transformation and since they are not necessarily perceived as shocking by every viewer, due to temporal and cultural aspects and depending on how desensitised some viewers may be, we should refrain from hasty generalisations. In the research field, there are plenty of pictorial illustrations of human-animal relationships. They not only visualise deficient conditions (e.g., in factory farming), but also stage alternative scenarios, occasionally with utopian and exaggerated features, for instance, in vegan art. Images convey *impressions* of existing and possible human-animal relationships, sometimes of unrelatedness, but also of implicit and explicit moral appeals. Imagery and image practices are not only important for media representation of vegan and animal rights organisations and their members, but they are also highly significant in the context of initiating, encouraging, or maintaining vegan lifestyles. On the one hand, they are addressed in interviews where subjects mention their motivational power to change one's own habits. However, the material shows that they can also subsequently justify and stabilise a change in habits (i.e., with regard to the narrative construction of contexts and semantics of meaning).

An analysis of the importance of image-based experience and communication must also take into account the importance of different types and dimensions of imagery. This needs to include their modes of functioning as specific forms of expression, articulation, communication, and documentation. An examination of images can take place on at least three levels, which of course are often intertwined and can only be separated analytically, if at all: As interpretation, in the narrower sense, where images are analysed in their own right (i.e., with regard to their intrinsic dimensions) and their inherent logic (Przyborski & Slunecko, 2020); as analysis with regard to the use and effects of images (Straub, 2022); or — as it is done in this article — an analysis of how *seeing* and *showing* violence against animals is talked about and what this teaches us about the functions of imagery.

First, it should be noted: The scenario of *sitting in front of the PC crying* is found across the interviews. Here is an example from an interview with Maja:

> And um, then I feel somehow, because, I think, there are always kind of impulses (I: mmh), uh, the more I surfed the Internet and did a bit of research and then, of course, I came across these, um, animal videos, these slaughter videos and, um, yes, I found that creepy, of course, and then I sometimes sat (snort) in front of it and cried and I thought: Shit, what is that? And (inhale) somehow, no, to me that was, yes, I knew it, even before, also when seeing the animal transports on the road while driving, and I thought: Shit, uh there are animals in there and, uuh, this is a no-go and (inhale), but then you look away again and then everyday life goes on and, well. And then (sniff) I just got very

interested and, YES, at some point I sat in front of the computer
and said: "Honey, from now on I will not eat any, it's impossible
now, I won't eat animals anymore, I will do that now, no,
consistently!" (Maja, 2019, lines 20–31)

As a reminder, when it comes to her conversion to veganism, Sue also emphasises the important role of images and video material, such as material provided by PETA; she also reports a deep shock. In the course of the interview, she speaks more concretely and talks about the emotional impact the images had on her. Pictorial impressions of animals being maltreated and tortured are perceived as depictions of the cruel reality and this is difficult for her to bear (Sue, 2019, line 1552ff). It is particularly interesting how Sue justifies her own views through linguistically and affectively charged imaginations and analogies, thus creating potentially affirmative images through the narrative itself. By using the expression "like a horror movie" (Sue, 2019, line 1588), for example, she tells of how appalled she felt while staring into the abysses of human nature and listening to slaughterhouse employees who would torture animals deliberately while even posing in front of the camera. She does not want to be on the same level with these people, who she judges as brutal and cruel, who have families, who are entitled to education, who have the right to vote and to live — and she does not want to support what they stand for. (Sue, 2019, line 1590ff). Here, the difference between killing and consumption is levelled, and the context of consideration is about perceived responsibility. The *people* Sue has seen acting in a morally reprehensible way and causing the suffering of animals are linguistically constructed as *perpetrators*. Sue is willing to see them as *normal* fellow citizens, but at the same time she denies their normality. She does not speak of violence as an exceptional case, but of the regularity and solidification of violence, irrational acts of violence that she perceives as being rooted in lustful drives. Moral evaluations involving moral categories and their reinterpretations are found repeatedly in the course of the interview. Sue locates herself as a person who co-suffers with the animals and she emphasises her own ability to empathise with the animals' situation, to have imagination and to be willing to get emotionally involved: "(...) then I just imagine this situation (inhale), how I would feel there myself (I: yes). (Inhale) I would be terrified, I would be in pain, I wouldn't know what was to come (...)" (Sue, 2019, lines 1573–1575). This would give her motivational strength to want to do something about the perceived suffering, despite others' ridicule and their denial of her perception of reality. In her narration, Sue repeatedly addresses them as co-perpetrators. At various points in the conversation, Sue makes it clear that she is experiencing both deep sadness and great anger.

Across all interviews, the emotional efficacy of images is addressed. They encourage people to break from old habits of animal consumption; they thus unfold a power that is interpreted in the interviews primarily as a pressure to act. Seeing and being touched plays an important role throughout. In the interviews, it refers specifically to the visibility of the cruelty and brutality to which suffering creatures are subjected. Images are thus seen as something that reveals what was previously invisible and, according to Elias (1982), relegated and veiled behind the scenes of social life. However, the material also shows that pictorial confrontation is not only experienced passively, but sometimes occurs through active engagement. A subsequent aspect is that images are understood as cultural techniques of visualisation (Scholz, 2021). They are framed as access to social reality and simultaneously, they create credibility. This is illustrated by Sue, who first refers to *Faces of Truth in the Cube*, where one can watch video sequences of animals being tortured in slaughterhouses. She compares these to snuff videos and emphasises again: "This is the reality you see there" (Sue, 2019, line 1666ff). To her, this is video footage from the "front lines", from the "slaughterhouses" and "animal concentration camps" (Sue, 2019, line 1684f). It is not only interesting how Sue linguistically frames her perception of violence through the use of analogies. A few sequences later, she not only addresses her own strong emotions and affects when she sees *shocking images*, but also how other people *see* them and what it is like to watch the others seeing them. In doing so, Sue points out how images allow to expose emotional effects in others, thereby legitimising one's own feelings and reactions:

There is already a lot of footage about it (inhale, groan), uh, you
can also watch it on Youtube (I: ok), where people really, uuh,
nearly collapse, people who really had absolutely no idea. They
probably see this for the first time (inhale) and, uh, they are all

run down. They are in tears, they almost collapse from crying (I:
mmh). *Peeeople* who then (inhale) stand in the pedestrian zone,
stand there and cry (Sue, 2019, lines 1674–1680).

The focus here is on the visualisation of the emotional and affective effects of these images
on others — reactions that can be expected because they are considered *normal*. Passers-by in the
pedestrian zone are representative of the *cross-section of society*, they represent *the* public. Across
various sequences, Sue criticises the *ignorance of fellow human beings to perceive animal suffering*
and she assumes that this ignorance is nullified by *seeing* and mediated by *showing*. This
strengthens the validity of one's own sensations and the invalidity of deviant reactions. The visually
induced perception of violence against animals is tightly linked to truth claims. Transparency,
instead, lack of insight from "people who really have absolutely no idea" (Sue, 2019, line 1676f)
— making the violence visible — is central here. This shows that not only the *seeing* of violence
against animals is highly significant for the reconstruction of vegan self- and world-relations, but
that it must be understood in relation to *talking about seeing* and *showing* violence. The use of
images is not just a moralising act of showing, as for example, when Sue wants to make people
think by using "vegan car stickers" (Sue, 2019, line 2277ff), but images also serve to l*egitimise* her
own vegan convictions. They become highly significant in the context of narrative identity
construction. Sue makes this clear by noting that one should confront these people with images
provided by PETA or let them spend a day in the slaughterhouse (Sue, 2019, line 227f). At the
same time, she emphasises: "We vegans confront ourselves with reality" (Sue, 2019, line 231f).
Confronting oneself is an integral part of her vegan understanding of herself and the world as well
as her role in the world.

**"Cruel Images are Haunting Me": Internalised Images and Imaginations of How to Create
Closeness and Distance**
Not only the visual experience of violence (e.g., conveyed through shock images of
slaughterhouses), but also the internalisation of these images finds much space for articulation in
the interviews. Images are discussed in terms of their motivational and stressful effects. Thus, the
following question is repeatedly raised in various interviews: What can or must you bear yourself
and what must you distance yourself from? Moments of (self-)distancing and other regulative
mechanisms take hold. These lastingly shape a relationship of closeness and distance, of empathy
and compassion towards the animal — a relationship that is influenced by former experiences of
pleasure when tasting animal products such as meat and milk. Flo addresses the internalisation of
images that have a negative affirmative effect and are re-actualised in various everyday situations:

And what I find really problematic is that these non-vegans
(inhale) don't know what they're saying when: "Yes, now I'll buy
myself a schnitzel first, or I'll only buy organic meat" (inhale
heavily) and they have no idea what that triggers in me. Because,
when somehow, when I then see them eat meat, or even when I,
uh, in the supermarket at the damn meat counter (heavy inhale,
swallow) — you know, through skillful customer guidance they
ensure, yes, that one must walk past the meat counter — (I:
mmh) (inhale), then, um, then I have these films in my head
again, from Twitter, somehow, (I: mmh) these whole
slaughterhouse scenes (inhale), um, where — well, I don't want
to elaborate on that now, you can also look it up on the Internet
yourself (inhale). BUT THAT'S WHAT's GOING ON INSIDE ME!
(Flo, 2019, lines 421–431).

Images, however, are also *deliberately* recalled. As Sue notes:

(...) these cruel images, they are haunting me. I can't just forget
them, because I cried such bitter, hot tears, because (deep
breath), because sometimes I could cry just thinking about them,
and sometimes I bring them back to my memory — then I could
cry bitterly (Sue, 2019, lines 1621–1624).

The images are turned into imaginations and in the interviews, they are sometimes conveyed by means of figurative language. An essential aspect is the creation of closeness to the (suffering) animal — a relationship that is verbalised as empathy, compassion, or attachment. Ben emphasises the role of imaginations in seeing the suffering creature behind the product and putting the animal's well-being above one's own pleasures and cravings:

> When I manage, for example, if someone comes and says: Oh come on, now eat this cheese sandwich (I: yes) or something like that, (hissing inhale) and I manage, right at that moment (.), uh, to see the animals that are hidden behind it (I: mmh), to see the cow that gave the milk (I: mmh), to see the calf, that is the reason why the cow has the milk in the first place (I: mmh) (...). And when I then see the mother cow (.) and the calf, which one has taken away from her, yes, one or two days after she gave birth to it, when I hear her, at that moment, the screaming (.) (I: mmh), the screaming of the mother and her calf, because they are separated (inhale) (Ben, 2019, lines 726–736).

This affective story about *seeing* the cow and her calf behind the cheese sandwich illustrates the active and situational, linguistically supported creation of proximity to the animal and distance from the product. *Seeing* the separation of mother and calf two days after the calf's birth and *hearing* their cries, illustrates how Ben uses language to individualise both animals and ascribe subject status to them. The semantics of screaming and crying differ from euphemisations or animalisations (see Adams, 1990; Buschka et al., 2013; Mütherich, 2015), that create distance from the animal's capacity to feel and thus to suffer. Ben does not speak of *mooing* but explicitly of *screaming* animals. In contrast to this active creation of proximity via language, Ben anonymises and generalises the human intervention (*taking something away*) — thus creating distance. The perception of suffering animals need not necessarily be linked to physical violence or killing; here, it is symbolised in the *separation of mother and child*. The insertion and visualisation of the hidden suffering is seen by Ben as desirable. In the process, both potential success and failure are conceivable. Normatively regulated and thus normalised relations of proximity and distance to farm animals are reversed; the same applies to the relationship to animal products such as meat or cheese. It is a constant process of re-actualising a visualisation of the hidden, in our case, symbolised by the cheese sandwich. The tension between the creation of closeness and distance to the suffering animals is also shown in an ambivalence of feelings of happiness and sadness, which Ben explicates at another point in the interview:

> That is also, on the one hand it is then a mixture between a feeling of happiness that you can look at that (I: yes), that you can practice this concentrated looking, but on the other hand there is of course also (inhales quickly) a lot of sadness, uh, because you know, that takes place every day (.) uh countless times takes place (inhales), uh, yes (...). (Ben, 2019, lines 742–745)

The practice of focused, mindful looking refers to Buddhist perception exercises, which become a recurring theme in the interview with Ben. In his remarks, a relationship between situationally established closeness to the animal as subject and simultaneously established distance through generalisation ("that's what you see" / "that's what you know") becomes apparent. It is a fine line between self-efficacy and self-stress, which is inherent in the perception of the many forms of animal suffering and the confrontation with it. The ability to "manage", to get something done, can be understood here as the ability to resist, to resist external stimuli when someone wants to entice and seduce with a cheese bread. This example illustrates that self-regulatory moments are inscribed here in perceptions, as well as in the way they are communicated. It is particularly interesting that the resistance outlined here can manifest itself — in the embodied form of disgust. With regard to the transparency or intransparency of suffering, the relationship between deeply felt attachment and compassion on the one hand, and disgust and aversion on the other, is of central relevance.

From Closeness to the Animal to Distance from the Product: "The Disgusting Meat and Milk as a Glandular Secretion"

Finally, we will take up what Sue addressed at the beginning with the phrase "loving animals and eating their dead bodies" (Sue, 2019, line 16). This represents the importance of including a relationship of proximity and distance in an understanding of violence in veganism, as will be argued below. It connects to what Carol Adams (1990) has described with the notion of the *absent referent*. Adams posits that the (structural and procedural, linguistically supported) separation of animal bodies from their products is a fundamental aspect of the continuation of animal consumption. The clear separation of animal husbandry, slaughter, processing, and consumption forms the basis here. The empirical material suggests that in some vegan self-narratives this separation is abolished (in the context of narratives about one's attachment to the animal, seeing the animal's suffering, or the like). Sometimes, however, it is retained linguistically by degrees. Terms like "tortured meat" (Flo, 2019, line 329), "the whole chopped up animal" (Sue, 2019, line 745) or "animals in clothes" (Ben, 2019, line 235) illustrate this. The process of disentangling meat as a product from the formerly living animal and creating a connection (also symbolically and associatively relevant) is gradual. The process of deconstructing a separation and establishing a symbolically, associatively relevant connection between meat as a product and the formerly living animal is gradual. This not only has the function of *establishing a closeness to the animal* (e.g. in terms of compassion for the tortured and maltreated creature), but also allows one to distance oneself from *retrospective objects of pleasure and taste*. In Sue's interview, this is particularly well illustrated when she describes a process of distancing and perceptual change from animal *food* using the example of the cutlet, which is transferred into a new context of meaning. Sue objectifies the entire animal into muscle fibers, tendons, cartilage, and bone:

> I simply looked at it anatomically (I: ok), I saw muscle fibers, tendons, cartilage, bones (inhale), I imagined which part of the animal this cutlet had originally been on, how it looked in its entirety before it was cut into a cutlet (I: mmh) (inhale). I automatically developed a different view of it. (Sue, 2019, lines 114–119)

What is interesting here is the reconstruction of a transformation process of the dead animal body into meat, which causes not only a psychological but also a physical distancing. According to their own statements, this *does not happen consciously*, but is nevertheless processed cognitively and carried out through the imagination. Boesch (2006) analysed the intricate network of the meanings of meat in his remarks on polyvalence. He asserts that ambivalence is anchored in meat in a special way, an ambivalent non-ego, which makes meat not only a nutrient or carrier of taste, but also a potential danger for one's own self because: "While it nourishes us, the external world threatens us at the same time" (Boesch, 2006, p. 10). Various (e.g., repulsive) meanings inscribe themselves in the dead animal body: For example, the disgust of a possible contamination of one's own body through the decomposition processes of a carcass, or also the fear of one's own death through the representation of an absence of life, visible and perceptible in a transfer of the former liveliness of the animal into materiality. For Boesch, the cooking process in particular, and the material and spiritual purification it entails, is an essential part of repressing these negative meanings: "It transforms the body into flesh, removes taboos or undoes aversions, and paves the way for the demanding appetite" (Boesch, 2006, p. 11). Through this process of transformation (cooking, preparing, and serving), the dead animal body is transformed into meat, into an object of pleasure and taste that is embedded in food cultures and table communities in specific ways. The demanding appetite (Boesch, 2006) refers to the attractive object properties of meat, its location in the context of taste, also on a habitual level, to positive connotations of (male) power, strength, and potency that have already made meat consumption the object of feminist perspectives (e.g., see Adams, 1990; Gutjahr, 2012, 2018; Mütherich, 2015). Its multiple other meanings remain subliminally present and threaten to break through at any time, for example, when biting cartilaginous tissue. Sue's recourse to the anatomy of the animal body here testifies to a reversal of a transformation: The flesh (represented here by the cutlet) becomes a dead body again. The rational dissection/fragmentation into its individual parts makes the transformation process transparent. At the same time, the dead animal body, as object, still stands in a contrastive relation to the animal as (anonymous) subject. In Sue's interview, something crucial is missing: the

process of slaughter, through which the living animal is first transformed into an object and then into meat as a dead animal body.

The reconstruction of the transformation of the animal body into a product with the function of deconstruction — a practice of inversion — is also found in other places in the interview. Sue refers to leather, for example, and presupposes a process of self-distancing here as well: "Because I always said to myself, 'Look, that's skin. All this can be made from your body' (I: mmh) and that was- that-that too made it absurd for me (inhale) (I: mmh)" (Sue, 2019, lines 139–141). Sue creates and conveys distance to animal products through an active process of imagination and analogisation ("always said to myself," ibid.). She is aware of the shocking effect of some of her comparisons on her fellow human beings and the associated (moral) horror and reexamines this in the interview: "That always sounds so shocking to many: Ohhhh how can you say something like that, they're human beings" (Sue, 2019, line 143f). However, Sue invalidates these reactions through claims of objectivity by increasing the scope of moral values and questioning the limits of taboo. Later, Sue compares her mother's Bolognese sauce to a shredded body and makes analogies to horror movies and cannibalism (Sue, 2019, line 179f) or speaks of (mother's) milk as a "glandular secretion" (Sue, 2019, line 1090). She notes that "it seems totally disgusting" to eat it (Sue, 2019, line 177). The term *disgusting* expresses an embodied repugnance, a form of repulsion, strongly affective and emotionalising. It is raised here to an abstract level and evolves into a claim of generality. Following society's taboos, Sue conveys her strong (physical and psychological) rejection and contrasts it with her own passionate consumption of meat in the past. The retrospective perception of pleasure and taste is explicitly omitted, but according to Boesch (2000, 2006) it threatens to re-emerge in the future.

Conclusion and Outlook

By reconstructing the articulation and experience of animal-related violence, I have shown that identity-relevant dimensions (of vegans) cannot be excluded. They are closely interwoven with normative claims of a perception, mediation and overcoming of animal consumption as a practice of violence. Questions of personal responsibility and the responsibility of others follow. As has been elaborated at various points, moral evaluations are documented, which develop an affirmative power. The logical argument here is emotionally tinged, just as emotions are rationally tinged. This can only be separated ideally in the context of analysis, when different weightings are taken into account, or connotative levels can be reconstructed via linguistic images in order to consider otherwise interwoven things separately. In this context, 1.) linguistic images and analogisations as well as reinterpretations play an important role. Connections to taboo ideas or human practices of violence, for example, have been elaborated here. In addition, 2.) talking about images in their function of making violence against animals visible is central. On the one hand, the motivational power of pictorial impressions to change one's habits was addressed. However, the material showed that pictorial impressions can also subsequently legitimise and stabilise a change in habits — that is, they must be viewed in a differentiated manner with regard to the narrative construction of contexts of meaning and significance. Also, 3.) the internalisation of images and imaginings (interwoven in places) works both to create proximity to the animal and distance from the animal product. This was addressed with reference to linguistic constructions such as *tortured meat*. As an extension, the question arises as to how 4.) violence is represented visually in concrete terms. Here, for example, the analysis of selected images from investigative animal rights activists or in the context of a representation of vegan organisations is useful. In this context, the media context of origin and storage (Breckner, 2008) and an *outreach approach* should also be considered in the analysis.

For violence research, the analysis of the (linguistic and figurative) demarcations of a moral consideration of humans AND animals is an important starting point for the raising of awareness of violent practices in general. The study of human experience of animal-related violence opens up perspectives to illuminate violence more in the interspecies context. The focus on (symbolically structured) relations of proximity and distance, for example, also regarding aesthetics and taste, enriches research perspectives in a special way. It helps to show contingencies in the perception of responsibility for violence — not only in the context of rational arguments, but also in relation to affective ties and blockades. In this way, social lines of conflict can also be reconstructed in an empathetic way. Although ecological and economic dimensions inherent in veganism were not considered in depth in this article, the inclusion of a future perspective is also relevant. According to Jonas (1984), the principle of responsibility can be linked to questions of

temporal limitation and dissolution of the understanding of violence to also include the living conditions of later generations in research on structural violence.

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