

ABSTRACT

Reunidxs en la Frontera: Understanding the Non-Human Animal as an Intersectional Identity

The main objective of this thesis is to interrupt dominant narratives in Critical Animal Studies that ignore histories of colonization, which shape the experiences of people of color and their conversations about non-human animals. Similarly, this project critiques scholarly and political spaces that make the non-human animal invisible. The idea is to begin thinking about non-human animals in relation to human oppression, especially while learning how both are informed by the concept of *the human*. Furthermore, my focus is to learn from the oppressed position of people of color as a method of understanding and viewing the complex interweaving relationships of non-human animals in laboring and exploitative systems. Conversely, however, I wish not to focus solely on the negative features of subjectivity, but more so on aspects of survival and resistance. By tracing the history of Spanish colonization and the different modes of Native survival, I ask us to think differently about non-human animal subjectivity in the context of animal husbandry. Additionally, I analyze political and academic spaces and their connections to discourses on speciesism and racism. Alongside broader decolonial and post-humanist work ---personal, activist, and academic---, I have included a veganized native recipe that reflects the complexity of hybridity in colonized subjects. Through personal narrative, I bring into dialogue the voices and experiences of people of color with non-human animals with the goal of creating a space for these conversations. The methods employed in this thesis include historical analysis, cultural interpretation, and story telling.

Reunidxs en la Frontera:
Understanding the Non-Human
Animal as an Intersectional Identity

Thesis

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“JUST BE YOU,” THEY SAY!

*Write with your eyes like painters,
with your ears like musicians, with your feet like dancers.
You are the truthsayer with quill and torch.
Write with your tongues on fire.*

—Gloria Anzaldua, *Women Writing Resistance:
Essays on Latin America and the Caribbean*

Just be you! Is what I have heard throughout this whole process of writing almost a book, or at least it feels like it. Writing about racism and speciesism in relation to the history of colonization is something that is not easy at all to do. But someone has to do it. The hardest part for me has been writing from the place of a brown Latina born in Mexico. Why? Because it is complicated and daunting to say that humans and non-human animals can occupy a marginalized position together, especially when thinking about the violence that continues to affect our communities of color. And because I understand this, I acknowledge the risks and implications of this project. I am not saying that my brownness grants me access or privilege in being able to make such comparisons. But it is precisely my position as woman of color that

has made me create space to question systems of power that do not just affect the human, but also the *animal*¹.

I say this because it was my position as a low-income woman of color in a white dominated space that has opened up questions about access and knowledge production in the field of Critical Animal Studies. This field is predominately taken up by white scholars who have not truly engaged with questions of race and class in relation to speciesism. However, more than the class question, I am interested in the race question, which I can imagine has been a difficult question for scholars to grapple with. But not working with questions of these seemingly opposing fields further makes it appear like they have no reason to be conversing.

I especially understood the dangerous clashes early on in my research when I started to move in and out of the Latino/a Studies and the Gender Studies departments. When talking about my project to Latino/a Studies professors there was an automatic reaction of disgust and push back. The idea that I am intentionally talking about Latinx as human-animals was something that disturbed these professors. How could I be talking about human as animal, when Latinx communities have and continue to fight for their humanity to be recognized? I concur and understand why these sentiments exist, especially because of the historical violence that was tied to the animalizing of brown and black bodies. That is to the historical violence of colonization.

¹ When stating *animal*, I am referring to both human and non-human animals for the purpose of moving away from the implication of the word "animal" solely being used as a reference to non-human animals. Furthermore, it is also for the purpose of erasing the violent stereotypes that are accepted as innate for non-human animals and used as a comparison for human-animals when they embody the violent stereotype given to non-human animals.

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And because of this, it is important for me to say out loud that colonization was fucked-up because there was real lived violence that happened. Not just the actual violence of rape, murder, and disease, but also the real struggles of surviving within these new oppressive systems. Throughout the process of writing this project, it was this haunting historical connection to colonization that I had a difficult time working with.

But when I would ask myself why I thought about this project to begin with, I was drawn back to this question of why whiteness appeared to be central to animal rights and academics. I felt like I was the only person of color asking these questions. But after careful research I realized that there are people of color producing knowledges that deeply engage with oppression and human and animal subjectivity. However, most of these people of color are raising awareness outside of academia, which is the reason why I had a hard time finding them. Some of these people were also scholars who were working against popular vegan and animal rights narratives by critiquing these movements as making the marginalized human invisible. Thus, these researchers' academic and non-academic work functions to centralize disenfranchised humans and non-human animals in their arguments.

When I read about these different scholars of color that were up and coming, I no longer felt alone and silenced. Of course, there were non-colored feminists that influenced my work and also helped liberate me. But I wanted more. The "more" that I wanted was to dig into these complicated and intricate relationships of oppressed animals—non-human animal and human.

What I want to do in this project is to really think about the complicated relationships that emerged out of colonization. Our current discussions of ongoing colonization recognize that we are still affected by it. But it is also these same knowledge productions that continue to acknowledge that colonized populations still have subjectivity and agency despite the monstrosity of colonization. And for this reason, I began to connect more with theories that questioned one or even two-dimensional arguments of oppression. It was scholars like Maneesha Deckha with Posthumanist theory that opened the space for me to even begin to talk about non-human animals within this axis of oppression.

It was Deckha's work that liberated me from Peter Singer's abstract answer to speciesism². It is interesting, coming from an animal rights background where Singer is constantly glorified, to no longer be subject to his interpretation of animal liberation. Singer's work, although very influential, puts the non-human animal in a victimized position, where humans are given the role of self-gratifying saviors. I also say this because it was in the animal rights movement (a movement profoundly influenced by Singer's theory on speciesism) where I felt the most constrained about my identity. In these spaces, my oppression was second to the liberation of the non-human animal. My oppression was not viewed as something that needed immediate attention or action.

² Despite my current critique of Singer, his work on speciesism has been groundbreaking because of his argument that states that non-human animals too face oppression from which they need to be liberated from.

It was situations like these that made me question the connection between human and animal oppression. And although I appreciated Singer's term on speciesism, I still felt that there was something else to be said about oppression and bodies that are oppressed. It was my inability to fully identify with what he was stating that pushed me to seek what others were saying about speciesism³.

Thus, it was due to my *disidentification* with Singer and other white scholars that I was able to look for alternative identifications that really sought to bridge together the animal and human binary. I did this through recognizing power relations, continued colonization, and the processes of decolonization. Thus, it was Jose Muñoz's disidentification theory that continued to reassure me in my journey of this project⁴.

In addition to post-humanism, anti-speciesist criticizing, and disidentification theory, I am also working within feminist care ethics and decolonizing theory. Feminist care ethics⁵, the way I interpret and use it, is a way to think about caring for animals through listening with

³ Carol Adams critiques Singer's view of speciesism as masculinist by saying that, "Ideological systems often screen humans for animals' harm and suffering by offering rationalization that legitimize those harms, as a number of theorists...have emphasized. Men specially...are socialized from an early age by our 'sex-species system' (Adams, chapter 8) to consider sympathy and compassion for animals as unmanly and feminine (Luke 1997, 1998), one aspect of more general derision of compassion in society at large, as discussed by Adams in 'The War on Compassion'" (Donovan and Adams, 1).

⁴ "Disidentification is about recycling and rethinking encoded meaning. The process of disidentification scrambles and reconstructs the encoded message of a cultural text in a fashion that both exposes the encoded message's universalizing and exclusionary machinations and recircuits its workings to account for, include, and empower minority identities and identifications. Thus, disidentification is a step further than cracking open the code of the majority; it proceeds to use this code as raw material for representing a disempowered politics or positionality that has been rendered unthinkable by the dominant culture" (Muñoz, 31).

⁵ This concept comes out of feminist ethic-of-care theory which was introduced by Carol Gilligan's as identifying women's "'conception of morality' as is 'concerned with the activity of care... responsibility and relationships,' as opposed to a men's 'conception of morality as fairness,' which is more concerned with 'rights and rules'" (Donovan and Adams, 2).

emotion. Whereas, decolonizing theory, on the other hand, makes visible continued oppression while also serving as a tool of resistance by bringing back erased histories and practices. Thus, decolonization interweaves itself throughout this project in support of greater decolonial politics⁶.

What do I mean? Well. I believe that decolonial politics can offer a different way of thinking within Critical Animal Studies. I want to think about them together by showing how decolonial politics can give us a different perspective on the on-going violence against non-human animals. I plan to do this by understanding how decolonial interventions work with the *knowing* that there was, and still is, an unimaginably real violence and ongoing forms of economic exploitation. But in decolonization theory we also know that thinking in terms of victimization does not work, which is a key point to my work. Ratna Kapur, in her work, is “in favor of transcending the victim subject and disrupting the cultural and gender essentialism”⁷ in order to figure out actual strategies to stop the erasure of colonized bodies. She does this by stating that there needs to be more solidarity, through the production of decolonizing knowledge.

Kapur’s work demarcates how decolonization is a historical process that acknowledges past violence while choosing to not just let that be the narrative that defines these experiences. Because despite this history, colonized people are still here and their lives are still important.

⁶ Keep reading and you will find out who I am using to work through decolonialism.

⁷ “The Tragedy of Victimization Rhetoric: Resurrecting the ‘Native’ Subject in International/Post-Colonial Feminist Legal Politics” (Kapur).

Therefore, it is the “still here” aspect that I am interested in learning from and will work on throughout this paper.

Therefore, I begin by stating that animal violence is here and is very present in society. Animal violence is wrong. Period. But unfortunately there is no way of escaping it completely. So in my project, as a thought experiment, I am interested in understanding how the remnants of colonization might be able to tell us something about the current resilience of non-human animals today. What I am calling for acknowledges that the process of building more attentive relationships begins with admitting that this is an unequal world, and oppression, where it stands, is not going to disappear. The lives of non-human animals in the context of colonization, oppression, and exploitation still matter. This conversation is relevant and needs to happen.

I begin by discussing colonization and animal husbandry in the first chapter. This chapter begins with a brief history of Spanish colonization where I focus on the inclusion of the Natives. I draw on this analysis by looking at inclusion as a form of domestication, breeding, and making bodies laborable. The inclusion aspect of the Natives is what guides this chapter, because it was their re-articulation as subjects of inquiry into this new society that allowed them to live and resist at the same time. This form of colonization is very different from English colonization, because English colonization focused on the exclusion of Natives through genocide, and later on, reservations. It is this inclusion of “othered” bodies that I will explore.

I move on from this history to talk about non-human animals through a similar colonizing lens of domestication, labor, and breeding in animal husbandry. The point here is not to say that the process of colonization is also the same case in animal husbandry. But rather the purpose is to look at what we know of colonized populations and to move beyond a human-animal exploitation model by focusing on co-worlding. What I am deeply engaged with in this chapter is using this context of colonization as a model of rethinking our current discussions of non-human animal oppressions. The idea is to think about the ways in which we relate to animals and imagining how we might build better relationships through moving away from a victim- perpetrator model.

The second chapter analyzes how discourses on speciesism reflect the power dynamics that exist within racism through an oppression framework. I begin this chapter by questioning the dangers of making such comparisons, while also pointing to the crucial obligations that we cannot deny their similar oppressions. I go into showing how mainstream anti-speciesist conversations further marginalize communities of color by ignoring the experiences of poor people of color and their relationship to speciesism. Current Critical Animal Studies discourses need to recognize historical colonial practices of power and domination, which reflects in their lack of intersectional approaches. However, I also locate a need for communities of color to question the importance of actually seeing the non-human animal as oppressed. We have more to gain from acknowledging the similarities and differences than we have by ignoring them. In this chapter, I specifically focus on critiquing white dominant animal rights narratives that

maintain a very simplified idea of speciesism simultaneously appropriating the history of African American slavery in their movement. At the same time, I discuss how there needs to be more work done as well on behalf of feminist scholars to actually engage with histories of racism, especially in the field of Critical Animal Studies. Finally, I end this chapter with emphasizing the dangers of this work that takes both speciesism and racism seriously, but I also call for a rethinking of what we, as marginalized communities, can learn from becoming conscious of animal subjectivity, oppression, and exploitation.

In the last chapter, I go deeper into the production of laborable bodies. In this section there is a lot of reflection in what it means for me to be Mexican, undocumented, and vegan. I do this by bringing back questions of colonization into our current conversations of non-human animals in the work force. I specifically look at human and animal labor to think about the ways that certain bodies are “othered” through making them laborable and killable. I purposely draw on Gloria Anzaldúa’s borderland theory to create new spaces for these discussions to happen. Anzaldúa’s conceptual theory, in this chapter, also allowed me to focus more on the messiness of identity and belonging, as place that can also embody resistance. Similarly, it is here where I use disidentification as a decolonizing process. Finally this chapter ends with one recipe. One of which I learned about here in the United States, and the other which was passed down to me when I visited Mexico for the first time in 20 years. The recipes are very specific to reclaiming space and visibility in both academia and animal rights movements.

I want my work to ignite conversations about humans and non-human animals by thinking about the real implications of racism and speciesism in the greater field of “post” colonialism. The *real* question is working through what is human, and who has historically been denied this humanness. Why is “post” colonization and slavery important to us as people of color? And what is at stake if we do not see the fragility of humans as animals, as well as the continued invisibility of *animal* as subject. One of the goals of this project is to think about the ways in which we can begin to reflect on anti-racist and anti-speciesist discourse by understanding that domestication, breeding, and laboring are parts of colonization as well. The idea is to include non-human animals into greater conversations of intersectionality and oppression. This I argue begins with being more conscious and aware of the complex identities and relationships that already exist within the experiences of marginalized humans. I know my claims can be unthinkable for some people in the community who experience actual violence. But my analysis, and I hope it comes through, is really grounded in a critique of colonization. This anti-colonial and anti-exploitation piece is thinking deeply about the subjectivity of those that are exploited in the service of a post-colonial and post-human project.

THE CROSSROADS OF COLONIZATION: THE DOMESTICATION OF THE COLONIZED AND COLONIZERS

Often times, non-human animals are left out of conversations about colonization. For when we think about colonization, we automatically think human, or for that matter, subhuman or “other” to a specific idealized hominoid, but still human. However, this chapter engages with practices of domination and control and their relationship to colonization and power. Non-human animals are subject to animal husbandry, which speaks to the power and dominance of colonial practices. Colonization, often defined in terms of genocide and exclusion in Anglo-Saxon settler colonialism, functions differently in Spanish colonization through control and incorporation. This type of colonization specially operated during the Spanish conquest of the “New World,” where Native peoples were pushed into missions as a way of civilizing them and making them incorporable into the reconstructed society. A similar method of inclusion is noticed in the treatment of non-human animals in animal husbandry, where animals are domesticated, bred, and cared for, for the economic benefit of humans. The

focus here is on the idea of includable bodies and the relationships they have to power structures—for we know that in every relationship there is a reciprocal exchange, a purpose. Ultimately, the inclusion of the Natives and farmed animals benefited those with the most power in a variety of ways. Similarly, adhering to such forms of domestication, on behalf of the colonized subject, meant using survival as a form of resistance—where *animal* does not allow for complete erasure of the self.

In this chapter I will look at specific forms of colonial relationships that analyze human and animal subjectivity to draw attention to the conditions of non-human animals and animal husbandry. I will specifically look at the three areas of unacknowledged colonial thoughts and practices, which are domestication, breeding, and labor. I am interested in bringing into conversation the complex relationship between colonizer, Spanish and Human, and the colonized, Natives and non-human animals, which were obviously subjected to unbalanced power relations, but in turn enabled such relationships of mutual benefit to flourish⁸. Only then through engaging in dangerous comparisons, can we really hope to fully understand power structures and the complex relationships that exist within those configurations; which

⁸ Many of the non-human animals that came into the Americas were not native to the land. Horses were brought over on the Spanish ships. No horses had existed in the American continents prior to colonization. The horses spread and became the useful for some cultures, thus ultimately becoming native animals of North America. In terms of speed and traveling distances, this gave the colonizers an enormous advantage. Cows and donkeys were brought over as well. This speaks to how the non-human animals that were brought over did not have a paralleling experience to that of the Natives, because these non-human animals immigrated into this land as already having been domesticated. Thus, ultimately speaking to the flourishing relationships that occurred and that transformed the whole colonial landscape, despite the oppressive systems that were in place.

in turn should allow us to re-imagine animal husbandry and its practices on non-human animals.

As I began to write about colonization it became clear to me that I needed to make the distinction between the colonization by the English and the Spanish. Spanish colonization began in 1492 and continued for about 350 years, with the arrival of Columbus in what is known as the modern day Caribbean islands. During those centuries, the people who left Spain left in search of goods that they could bring back to Spain—the idea was always of returning to their homeland. Their intentions were not to settle, however many continued to live on the land and sought to incorporate the Natives into their culture. To make this clearer, when the Spaniards arrived, much like the English, they did not discover a “virgin” land — a land that was untouched by humanity. They instead discovered a land that was already inhabited by various species including humans — an unexpected roadblock in their plan of obtaining resources. These humans that Columbus actually encountered were the Taino people.

The story goes that Columbus viewed the Taino people as savages and uncivilized, unworthy of being viewed as part of the “humanity” he had left back at home. For it was shortly after that, that he enslaved the native peoples. In his notes Columbus says, “‘with 50 men you could subject everyone and make them do what you wished’ and that the natives were ‘such cowards and so fearful’ that they were, therefore, easy to rule” (*Native Peoples — the “Indians”*). In this excerpt, Columbus is right away engaging with language of superiority and

passivity. Thus, this briefly highlights how the emphasis was not actually on extermination or exclusion of these natives, because Columbus had a fascination with the native's ways of living, therefore eroticizing them. Columbus' take on the Natives, although seemingly subjugating was actually romanticized through the ways in which he viewed the people, as passive enough to give all the goods that he viewed as valuable. Thus, Columbus' relationship to the Natives was reciprocal to create subjects of one another, because as the Natives saw the conquerors as Gods, the conquerors similarly glamourized the people. However, the notion of conquerable people was a similar idea undertaken by the English when they came to the Americas to settle in search of freedom of religion. Unlike the English's idea of Manifest Destiny—the belief that they were destined to settle and civilize the Americas, which included for the most part separation and genocide—the Spanish took a different turn of incorporation and "transculturación"⁹ of the native peoples, an idea that first began with the recognition of natives as human¹⁰.

Bartolomé de las Casas was among the original priests to be brought over from Spain as the first "protector of the Indians." Ironically, despite his position of power to further colonize

⁹ Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, first coined the word "transculturación" in *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*. Transculturation critiques the dominant anthropological term "acculturation," to emphasize the on going back and forth and mutuality (on unequal terms of course) of the process of colonization. His work has been important in the development of postcolonial agency and achievements (Davies, 141-144).

¹⁰ Donna Haraway's theory of nature-culture she defines as, "So, despite the claims of anthropology to be able to understand human beings solely with the concept of culture, and of sociology to need nothing but the idea of the human social group, animal societies have been extensively employed in the rationalization and naturalization of the oppressive orders of domination in the human body politic. They have provided the point of union of the physiological and political for modern liberal theorists while they continue to accept the ideology of the split between nature and culture" (*Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, 11).

the Native people, de las Casas became an advocate for them. Originally, he like other Spanish colonizers at the time, enslaved and exploited the natives through owning and managing acquired (I would argue stolen) lands called *Encomiendas*. These served as spaces of transculturation for “Indian” people and sites of managing and maintaining exploitable labor — a form of slavery. Eventually, de la Casas went from being a “slave” owner, to an advocate recognizing Natives as *human*. He argued that because Natives were capable of learning the Spanish language, they had the capacity to work towards their humanity and away from their “savagery.” However, Martha Menchaca, in *Recovering History Constructing Race*, reminds us that, “Although the church succeeded in obtaining the legal status of human being for Indians, it also endorsed the crown’s position that [Indians] must be governed and protected” (Menchaca, 53). This is what makes Spanish colonization different from the English, in that they sought to include the Natives like non-human animals through practices of domestication, breeding, and labor.

These practices manifest in animal husbandry. This is defined as the domestication, breeding, and care of animals¹¹ that work to advantage humans. Some would say that this works in the best interest of domesticated animals despite the human’s selfish interest in using what they consider to be a disposable body. Domestication in this case works to tame animals to make it easier for those producing the animals to kill and exploit them. For example, a practice that is used in animal husbandry is the action of de-horning. This practice of removing

¹¹ Usually refers to farmed animals.

the horns from the animal, by the farmer, is supposed to benefit the animal in dealing with his aggression towards himself and others. On the other hand, animal rights activist have argued this is inhumane because it causes the animal physical pain and it also alters the animal's socialization with those of the same species. How then does animal husbandry relate to notions of colonization and what can we learn from its model of domestication (inclusion) in comparison to Spanish colonization?

Having a better understanding of the history of animal husbandry is important as we move forward with questions of domestication, for this practice began by building trust and relationships between two species. Animal husbandry comes from the history of the domestication of *animals* where both human and wolf were both hunters. These *animals* resorted to hunting as a means of survival. Usually it was the dominant figure of the family/pack that went out to hunt as a way to care and provide for their family unit. These similar family values between wolf and human are what led to one of the first forms of domestication to optimize survival (*History of the Domestication of Animals*). As domestication began to expand to other non-human species, "civilizations which had relied on hunting and gathering as a means of subsistence now built permanent settlements and engaged in a pastoral existence relying on their cattle and crops. Once people realized that animals could be tamed, the creatures became incorporated into the most basic and widespread rituals of the culture" (Mark, *Animal Husbandry*). Thus domesticated animals were made includable into dominant structures of humanity, not just for farming purposes, but also to build

relationships. The human and non-human animal relationships that we often hear of are between dogs and humans. However, silencing or erasing other human and non-human relationships further perpetuates the invisibility of sentient animals, like cows or pigs¹², which exist outside of human homes. Throughout the course of this chapter I want us to think about who is made killable and how that is informed by the erasure of “othered” human-animal relationships. This of course, raises questions about the construction of hierarchies among non-human animal species in regards to their constructed disposability, which I propose to discuss later in this chapter.

The question that still guides me is, what makes for includable bodies into dominant societies? In asking this, I want to keep in mind that both human and non-human species have the power to be colonizers¹³. However, before I proceed I would like to make more explicit the framework of colonization that I am working within. This is important as I am moving away from Cartesian productions of knowledge that only look to simplify answers through creating dualistic arguments. This Cartesian dualist framework has and can be easily applied to views about colonization. By moving outside of this dualistic framework of victim and perpetrator,

¹² Or other animals that are typically consumed or used for labor purposes.

¹³ Haraway highlights this concept of inclusion in her analyses of these relationships in biology. For she says, “Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan suggested that the myriads of living organisms owe their evolved diversity and complexity to acts of symbiogenesis, through which promiscuous genomes and living consortia are the potent progeny of ingestion and subsequent indigestion among messmates at table, when everyone is on the menu. Sex, infection, and eating are old relatives, hardly deterred by the niceties of immune discrimination, whose material and syntactic intra-actions make the cuts that birth kin and kind. Let me suggest, then, parting bites that might nourish mortal companion species who cannot and must not assimilate one another but who must learn to eat well, or at least well enough that care, respect, and difference can flourish in the open” (Haraway 207, 287).

we are able to gain a broader understanding of the powers of colonization. This is of course not to say that colonization was not cruel and dominating in nature, but by only focusing on this victim vs. perpetrator standard, we are erasing the resilience of *animals* successful survival. Similarly, to think that non-human animals cannot dominate and take the land of another species would be playing into this Cartesian structure that does not recognize the inter-web of connections and relationships that exists for all species. For if we actually took the time to really analyze such intricate relationships, we would realize that we are not as independent as we think we are. This works perfectly as I move away from centering the human as exceptional from the non-human animal. Similarly, I would like to work through the ways in which non-human animals have their own cultures and complicated bonds to each other and to us humans¹⁴.

Therefore, I would like to return to the model of colonization practiced by the Spanish for it is their points of inclusion that influences my critique of animal husbandry. Inclusion was what de las Casas had in mind when he advocated on behalf of the Natives, in terms of their humanity. A similar argument that currently guides the politics of animal rights activists for non-human animals is one that focuses on recognizing that non-human animals, not just human-animals, experience the pain of colonization in survival just as those who experience

¹⁴ Dona Haraway's theory of nature-culture she defines as, "So, despite the claims of anthropology to be able to understand human beings solely with the concept of culture, and of sociology to need nothing but the idea of the human social group, animal societies have been extensively employed in the rationalization and naturalization of the oppressive orders of domination in the human body politic. They have provided the point of union of the physiological and political for modern liberal theorists while they continue to accept the ideology of the split between nature and culture" (Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature, 11).

the physical torture and pain of colonization. Yet, while the humanity in Natives was recognized and legalized, their status still remained “other,” and they were included into society’s hierarchy at the very bottom of their constructed humanity.

Even though Natives were given this human status, non-human animals are still not considered conscious beings. This brings me to my next point of speaking for non-human animals. Linda Alcoff explains the difficulties that certain privileged people have when it comes to speaking for others who find themselves on the margins of society. This is a question that I also struggle with and look to reconcile through the process of writing this project. What does it mean that I can speak for non-human animals in my human voice? Even though Alcoff only had the human in mind, when she wrote “The Problem of Speaking for Others,” what it means to represent others and the self is one that I want to apply in my work when speaking for *animals* (human and non-human). Alcoff says that:

In order to evaluate attempts to speak for others in particular instances, we need to analyze the probable or actual effects of the words on the discursive and material context. One cannot simply look at the location of the speaker or her credentials to speak, nor can one look merely at the propositional content of the speech; one must also look at where the speech goes and what it does there” (Alcoff, 26)

Alcoff highlights the very important concept of paying attention to the intention of the work, rather than my position as human-animal. And though the words I will use to describe the place of animals comes from a language constructed by humans, humans are also a type of animal. While my form of communication is different from that of other animals, the intention of my words has the goal of deconstructing the binary that separates humans from non-human

animals. As Alcoff states, it is about the meaning of words and what those words are doing when they are delivered to a certain audience that is important. Similarly when thinking through human relationships, this very concept of who and when does anyone have the right or obligation to speak for others is one that continues to shape the ways in which knowledge is produced—this speaks to why I question my position often as I move forward and write. Thus, when speaking for non-human animals, the intention is not to anthropomorphize, because the constructions of human normativity are constantly changing. But the idea that I am writing through is one that acknowledges power relations between all *animals*; for whether you are human or a non-human animal, there is always a risk when speaking for others that are not yourself. Alcoff has argued that even when you speak for yourself, others hear you as representing a certain community that is informed by what you embody. Consequently, I do not expect to have all of the answers, if any, in this paper, but I do invite you on this journey as I explore and complicate the human/non-human animal binary. And I continue, by exploring next how and why Natives went from being “animal” to being incorporable as a lesser human.

The implementation of Encomiendas, during Spanish colonization, functioned as a site of domestication and creation of new identities, or what the Spanish referred to as “acculturation” and crossbreeding. The unspoken contract between the Spanish and Natives was this idea that the Natives needed to be civilized and taken care of by the colonizers. At the same time, the Spanish needed the Natives to work the land they were familiar with and facilitate their incorporation into the white “mans” New World. The Encomienda was also a

site of domestication for the Spanish, for they also had a disadvantage as foreigners and needed help acclimating to the new land. This also speaks to and challenges ideas they claimed of being superior and “all-knowing,” because from this we understand that having power does not actually mean that people are born more superior and dominant. Yet, when thinking about power and domestication, we often think of power in the sense of one being the controller, the mover of action, the one who dominates, the “male.” Domestication is often relegated to being controlled, passive, feminine, weak, and a non-agent in ones life. However, I would ask us to think more deeply about domestication in terms of both groups being an influence upon each other, yet, while also working through the ways in which power and domination inform these intricate relationships.

According to *The National Geographic*, domestication is “the process of adapting . . . animals for human use. Domestic species are raised for food, work, clothing, medicine, and many other uses. Domesticated . . . animals must be raised and cared for by humans. Domesticated species are not wild” (*The National Geographic*). Although this definition probably does not include the human under the label of animal, I want us to include it as such, for human is animal, and animal is human. In the case of Natives, they needed to be made part of the Encomiendas as a way to make them adapt to the labor¹⁵ needs of the Spanish — their laborable bodies became a human commodity. The domestication of the Natives, in the Encomiendas, operated also as a means of survival for the Natives. What is important to notice

¹⁵ The Spaniards also needed the indigenous linguistic, cultural, material, and scientific knowledge’s.

is that the Natives were not innately colonizable people. This is where we can point to power structures that allowed for the exploitation of Native peoples and for their tactics to become laborable and incorporable beings. Thus, while recognizing that such power structures allowed for their colonization, we also begin to point to the ways that the Spanish were also domesticated for the use of the Natives survival. As we move into the taming of the Spaniards, I seek to change the narrative of the passive Native, to one that sets emphasis on the fluid experiences of oppressed individuals and the ways in which they find that being consciously malleable sometimes is needed for survival purposes (which I would also argue is a form a resistance). This resistance is a way to enact agency within the larger power structure where those in power are also affected by colonization.

In the Encomiendas, it was the *encomendero* that was given the right to use the Natives for labor, while he “was responsible for their welfare, their assimilation into Spanish culture, and their Christianization” (*Encomiendas*). The *encomendero* in this case was in charge of raising and caring for the Natives, not just for their labor, but also for the very survival of his own people, that being the Spaniards. The Natives provided access to the lands, resources, and the ways in which to tame the land. This in and of itself is what fascinated the colonizers to begin with. For they saw that the way of living for Natives was some sort of paradise that they hoped to access through the taming of the Native — for taming the Native meant that the land was at their disposal. Thus, the human-animal worked out a relationship that allowed for space where both needed help in adapting. For Menchaca reminds us that, “of most

importance to the conquistadores was Indian labor, since the land was useless unless it had the people to farm, construct buildings, and work as domestic servants” (51). Yet, as Menchaca, later goes on to argue, this was a form of enslaving the Natives, under the notions that they needed to be civilized into the Spanish culture. Although, I would argue that while it is important to understand that as a people the Natives were dispossessed from their lands and made into exploitable labor, they were not completely un-implicated in their imposed “otherness.¹⁶” For later, it was their “acculturation” that allowed them to survive genocide. And this is not to say that genocide did not happen for those Natives that were named untamable. Furthermore, I use “acculturation” in quotations because assimilated people did not acquire all that the colonizer imposed upon them, even when that might seem to be the case due to the need to survive — nowadays we would call that code-switching.

This brings us back to the interrogations of inclusion and domestication in terms of non-human animals. For non-human animals there are two groups of domesticated animals, the obvious, as previously mentioned, would be what we consider pet animals, and the second are farm animals. I have realized, through my research, that animal husbandry is mostly located in the context of animal farming. Yet, what is interesting again, is the question of tamability and how that informs our ideas of domestication. When looking at farm animals, they are not the most aggressive species. They are passive, trainable, and loving animals. Loving, for we know

¹⁶ It is important to note that many indigenous people were already dispossessed when the Spanish arrived because they had been enslaved by other American peoples and were looking to the Spanish for liberation.

they can build relationships and care for their young, just as a human would. Similarly a human would not necessarily take responsibility for their young, just as non-human animals are also known to abandon their offspring. Nevertheless, farm animals are usually non-violent, although that's not always the case, for each animal, both human and non-human can reach a point of radical resistance. But once again there is a common thread in domestication that feeds off of non-violent beings. But what is the place of animals in their relationships with systemic power structures that exploit every part of them? And how are they also partaking and shaping relationships with humans? Or are they?

To reiterate, domestication is used to tame an animal and make that animal adopt the values of the dominant culture, usually for means of material assemblies. Animal husbandry fits into this notion of domestication for it seeks to incorporate non-human animals into society through taming, breeding, and manufacturing. After careful research, it seemed that this form of animal farming is used to maintain an exploitable population of non-human animals through practices that do not want to kill off these types of animals, for it's more beneficial for human needs to breed and make laborable non-human animals-not so different from the inclusion of indigenous populations. However, what is different in this case is that this is a phenomenon that continues to plague our times. Humans have become disconnected from non-human animals to the point that certain painful procedures used in animal husbandry are justified and validated. And, although animal husbandry is supposed to represent a system of integration where non-human animals have become close kin to humans, the fact is that the

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literature on this topic only shows how non-human animal's are domesticated for nothing more than human consumption. I am interested in intervening in animal husbandry as a discourse and practice that can take a less violent approach of incorporating laborable consumable bodies.

Before I move on, I would like to take a moment and describe what I am trying to argue about animal husbandry. Animal husbandry is a system by which animals become incorporable into society through bodily controlling and breeding. This, as noticed in the treatment of the Natives in Spanish colonization, looks at the interconnected systems by which both individuals are supposed to have a beneficial mutual relationship, while recognizing that one side has more power. However, the side with most power is still dependent on those they have deemed inferior. What is hard for me, as I move forward in trying to work through these relationships is trying to deconstruct the human-animal connection in relation to domestication. As the Natives also had some power in their colonized state, consider the idea whether this actually applies to non-human animals, where animals have or at least in some cases might have, some agency in their colonized position as property. Yet, domesticated animals have now become a part of human society and to deny my position in this would be an injustice to their imaginary voice and needs—for humans made for their dependent state and therefore humans need to take responsibility. This of course is something that many animal rights activists would denounce because for them domestication means slavery, thus

calling for radical liberation. However, I would complicate this position by insisting on the human-animal relationships.

I would like us to reimagine what animal husbandry might look like if we actually credited non-human animals as sentient beings who, too, can partake in domestic relationships. To rethink animal husbandry differently I would like to turn to Donna J. Haraway's approach to looking at animal-human *worldings*. Haraway, in *When Species Meet*, gives us a framework by which we can re-imagine a different way of "being-in-the-world" with non-human animals. Haraway's work challenges human exceptionalism by demonstrating how non-human animals are not any more dependent than human animals. For she says that, human exceptionalism, "... is the premise that humanity alone is not a spatial and temporal web of interspecies dependencies. Thus, to be human is to be on the opposite side of the Great Divide from all the others and so to be afraid of—and in the bloody love with—what goes bump in the night" (11). She goes to say that this idea of human superiority is, "...well marinated in the institutionalized, long dominant Western fantasy that all that is fully human is fallen from Eden, separated from the mother, in the domain of the artificial, deracinated, alienated, and therefore free" (11). Haraway is reminding us that we are not free and untouchable of all that is foreign to the human. The human is made up of interconnected systems of life that sustain this *animal* body, like bacteria and fungi. Our body would not exist without the systems that make it function, that we as humans might consider not part of us, because if we actually acknowledge such, this would make us animal. Human—

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meaning us and we—is not an individual being navigating alone in this world. Humans are constantly reconceptualizing the world around them by creating different relationships that aid in self-fulfillment and gain. Haraway goes on to reference Eden from the bible, as an imaginary place where only humans can imagine a world where he/she/they are free. But we are not living in Eden and all animals depend on an ecosystem to function and thrive. What does this mean in terms of rethinking through animal husbandry?

Dominant narratives on animal husbandry and domestication are based on the fantasy of human independence and the denial of interdependency. Accepting this system of independence is dangerous as it perpetuates humans as exceptional and *animals* as inferior. Yet, power is important to highlight in the sense that it is a functioning system and not an individualistic one, as Haraway would remind us. What seems to be missing and needs to be interrupted in animal husbandry literature is its construction of the human-animal hierarchy that does not exist in relation to independence, for human and animal systems are bound together by dependency. Bon Torres, in *Making a Killing: The Political Economy of Animal Rights*, is asking us to “reject the hierarchies we impose on the natural world” (80). Thus, he goes on to say, “if we can step outside of the hierarchy that we impose on the natural world, we begin to see a complementary system that works in concert, each piece of the ecosystem playing a part in maintaining the whole” (80). Torres is making a point by stating that our constant reproductions of hierarchies is only working to destabilize the relationships that we can actually have with other animals. By moving away from notions of superiority, we might be

able to reconnect with our most human self. One that finds that relationships can be reciprocated if we just listened with our whole selves.

This idea is to imagine animal husbandry as a mutual relationship with non-human animals. This would look differently depending on the context and the animal, as well as the personality of the human. It would only be humanist to think that our interactions with animals would all be same. Drawing and investing in these relationships would allow for more compassionate interactions between human and farm animal relationships. The notion of worldings can aid in reimagining a different relationship with non-human animals. Kathy Rudy, in *Loving Animals: Toward a New Animal Advocacy*, tells us that, “Animals live in different worlds, with different levels of awareness, contours of reality, and ways of sensing their surroundings. ...They live in worlds we can’t quite imagine because our senses have not shaped our reality in a way that can easily comprehend theirs” (176). However, just because we might not fully understand their realities, does not mean we should stop trying to understand their worlds and our place as ongoing *colonizers*. In reality, as humans, we might not be able to fully comprehend the needs and desires of animals, but there is something to be said about becoming conscious of the ongoing oppression of animals, while at the same time figuring out creative ways that we can engage differently with them. Similar to postcolonial and decolonial frameworks that acknowledge the ongoing subjugation of Native communities, but that also asks us to think differently about colonized populations, the recognition of *animal*

subjectivity and agency is important within a capitalistic system that functions because of their oppression.

Continuing this thread of worlding, I want to think about our current worlding with some non-human animals. For those of us who live with non-human animals, we understand that our world is made up together. We comprehend needs, pains, and feelings without human language. We create our world together. And together we navigate each other's differences, and this I believe is worlding—the making of a world together—that needs to happen in our relationships with *animals*, even those relationships where *animals* have been raised for capitalistic commodities. I am not calling for a romanticized picture of humans and farmed animals in green pastures. But maybe, we can transform the relationships that we already have with *animals* to ones that are less violent and less abusive. I am asking we do this by first viewing non-human animals as oppressed beings. Secondly, I ask that we stop victimizing animals, and that instead, we begin to credit them with subjectivity. Through crediting them with subjectivity we recognize their ability to have needs and desires in their life, as human-animals are given. A model for this could be the relationship that was developed between the Spanish and the Natives, where the lives of the Natives now are still important to discuss as part of a decolonial thought that claims that these lives still matter and are important to continue discussing. For it was early during Spanish colonization, where Natives were also viewed and treated as non-sentient beings, thus the thought of making a working relationship was not something considered. When Natives were finally given the

status of human, they were socially recognized as being capable of feeling pain and love. This label, however, did not free them from exploitation, but it did give them more space to move freely and find different ways to survive. The aspect of survival in colonization is also a painful one that seeks to repress those different identities of the Natives. And because Natives lives are still affected by this history, Native Study scholars like Scott Lauria Morgensen¹⁷, Bethany Schneider¹⁸, Andrea Smith and J. Ke haulani Kauanui¹⁹, have said that colonization is an ongoing process, which has manifested in different ways like globalization, heteronormativity, and imperialism (among others). However, this continuing colonization, should also account for the ongoing intricate relationships that form as a result of years and years of intermixing. I would argue that it allowed for a hybrid world to rise above differences that seemed irredeemable.

In actuality it was through the enforcement of interbreeding between Spanish men and the Native women that allowed for the inclusion of the Natives. This form of inclusion sought to incorporate Natives through the Hispanicization of their society through forced reproduction. This is further supported after highlighting that the Spanish men on the exploration had families back in Spain but were encouraged, if not forced, to take on a

¹⁷ Morgensen, Scott Lauria. "Settler Homonationalism: Theorizing Settler Colonialism within Queer Modernities." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16. 1-2 (2010): 105-131. Print.

¹⁸ Schneider, Bethany. "Oklahobo: Following Craig Womack's American Indian and Queer Studies." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106:3 (2007): 99-613. Print.

¹⁹ Smith, Andrea and J. Ke haulani Kauanui. "Native Feminisms Engage American Studies." *American Quarterly* (2008): 241-249. Print.

partnership with a Native women. The woman's body in this case became a vessel through which the actual production of a mixed-race was made possible. Thus, her body, through conquest and control became an actual tool of colonization by which she would produce a more includable race. Ultimately, this was done through the enforcement of intermarriage laws. Spanish men, upon acquiring an Encomienda, were mandated to take on Native women as concubines to aid in producing the Spaniard mix bred population. The goal was to create alliances with the tribes through the gifting of Native women. After marriage, "By having the father live with his family, Spanish culture and Catholic faith could be transmitted to his children and his wife's kinfolk" (Menchaca, 54). The Native women were used as pods to build and maintain allyship between the colonizers and the Native people. The women thus were used to "acculturate" and aid in the creation of a Mestizo race that was learning to acquire the ways of the Spanish, both for survival reasons and mythical ideologies that foreshadowed the coming of the conquerors. The Spaniards, also in this transition, were also acculturated in the Native ways, especially the men who lived in the household with their wives. The interbreeding conclusively functioned both ways for the Natives and the Spanish. For the Spanish would not have been able to settle without the help of the Natives, and the Natives their conditional inclusion as a way to have a place in the newly created society.

Once again, it is important to state that the relationship by no means started out as a peaceful union. In fact it was not peaceful at all in the beginning and even later the status of a Native was always diminished, especially for those that looked more Native than Spanish, or

more black than white. This is especially noticeable through the imposition of the Casta system. This racialized system was a chart that was used to measure the amount of Spanish blood a mixed person had. The most valued and superior of all on the chart was a full-bred Spaniard, and even more so, one who was born in Spain. However, a Mestizo/a with lighter skin had more of a possibility of acquiring status than someone who was black or darker in skin color. The casta system practices a method of trying to categorize difference in a way that is not binary. The casta system exemplifies a more complex hierarchy of interrelated and complex relationships of race based on who was actually includable to the new society. Serge Gruzinski and Nathan Wachtel note that, "The attraction exercised by the European's sector prevailed and in the end largely swept away the other. This prompted the Indians and half-castes to distance themselves from their heritage or to modify it in noticeable portions" (Serge Gruzinski and Nathan Wachtel, 233). I would not necessarily say that the "other" was wiped out, but I would say that because of the way power functioned through hierarchies it enabled the Natives to negotiate their identities that were in constant flux, especially with the ability for some of them to actually have access to move up in the social ladder. I would also argue that the Natives, as much as the Spaniards, were forced to change and adapt. Not to the degree that Natives had to assimilate, but because the Spaniard's social environment changed and they were forced to change with it.

The casta system could work as a way to think about identities in flux in relation to human-animal worldings. By this I do mean that we think about animals as sentient beings

with their own understandings and reasons for living. This *casta* framework by no means is perfect, but it can represent a complex web of interspecies relationships that can help us move away from the human and non-human animal dichotomy. Bringing this back to breeding and animals, I would like us to turn and reflect on the forced reproduction of non-human animals in animal husbandry. As I mentioned earlier, we can say that the Natives during conquest were forced to intermarry and reproduce. I ask that we think about this same scenario for non-human animals for they too have their own desires to be included into society. This makes interbreeding more complicated than the narrative we often hear about that tends to focus on violence and rape²⁰. Of course, those forms of violence were real and also need to be taken into account, but they do not necessarily have to be at the epicenter of the Native identity. I would like us to think about how we can also apply this to non-human animal breeding in animal husbandry.

To help us reframe animal husbandry's general goal of production through reproduction, I would like to turn to different imaginings of human-animal bonds in animal husbandry that can work for both types of *animals* in the process of subject formations. There is and has to be a different system that we can work with that seeks to value and include other non-human animals with less violent forms of inclusion. Animal husbandry is usually tied to

²⁰ Something to mention, in this context, is that many native women were also seeking out the Spaniards as a form of resistance against their own enslavement by other native peoples, where the Spaniards became the liberators. It is crucial to keep complicating simple narratives; therefore, it is more complicated, because for certain Mayan women, they wanted to be liberated from the Aztecs.

big animal manufacturers that seek to produce object-commodities through torturous practices that perpetuate early colonization methods. I would even argue that our humanity is diminished when we kill for the sake of capital without having any connection to the lives we are taking. Feminists, like Susan M. Squier, have talked about the ways in which we can have different relationships with non-human animals that nurture bonds and different kinship structures.

Squier's work has mainly focused on what she has called the liminal livestock. This term and her idea of human responsibility can help us look at the processes of animal reproduction differently. She describes this liminal space as, to refer to 'those beings marginal to human life who hold rich potential for our ongoing biomedical negotiations with, and interventions in, the paradigmatic life crises: birth, growth, aging, and death' (Squier, 139). The most striking word that I want to focus on is "negotiations." Negotiations, as a term, focuses on the relational aspect of species interaction, as well as crediting intelligence of decision and choice to other animals that are not human. Thus, Squier is asking us to think differently through the practices of animal care as initially defined in animal husbandry. Interestingly, Squier addresses non-human animals as living on the margins but yet at the same time, even though a place on the margins indicates erasure and exclusion, there is still a production that is happening because humans are breeding and raising animals. Therefore, if we are going to breed animals, then we should share in the responsibility of caring for them

differently that does not perpetuate the absent referent²¹. The question then is, how do we expect to love and treat humans who live lives on the margins when we cannot even treat with care other beings who do not embody the human? Thus, I say there needs to be more responsibility on the side of the human to not just acknowledge our subjectivity in human-animal relationships, but also in thinking differently about non-human animal reproductions and practices of care.

As I have previously stated, domestication and breeding practices can both be violent and coerced, but relationships, even human relationships, are always more complex and multi-dimensional. Practices of inclusion, such as reproduction and labor, complicate the ways in which power dynamics shift from being the abject of society to the palpable “other.” For reproduction and labor are the ways in which natives were includable into Spanish culture. And to emphasize, the Spanish were not as Godly as they’d like think, because we know that the Natives played a big part in the incorporation of the Spanish colonizers. But what were the parameters of laborable and exploitable bodies? And, if the natives became incorporable through labor, how was that any different than the importation of human slavery? Finally, how did enslaved black bodies become the ultimate abject under the “new” world order of Spanish colonization, while ensuring the new status of *human* for the indigenous populations?

²¹ “Behind every meal of meat is an absence: the death of the nonhuman animal whose place the meat takes. The “absent referent” is that which separates the meat eater from the other animal and that animal from the end product. We do not see our meat eating as contact with another animal because it has been renamed as contact with *food*. Who is suffering? No one” (“The Politics of Meat,” 6).

The labor I will focus on for this project, is the labor that centers on the engagement of the body in work for capital (re) production. I am especially interested in what constitutes these laborable bodies and how they come into being, in comparison to other more privileged non-laborable beings. Interestingly, the Natives transition into being legally recognized as human placed them at the bottom of the human hierarchy during conquest. And, I say at the bottom because African slaves were not even considered human enough to be in same hierarchy as the human. However, both the Natives and African slaves were considered and used for labor. The difference between these two groups was that one group was considered more human than the other. The Natives, because they were classified human, were viewed as labor that required more care, thus their bodies were seen as more fragile and adaptable, whereas, the enslaved African people were viewed as incapable of adapting into society—human society.

Thus, Natives' inclusion happened and was made possible through the enslavement of black bodies, because before that the indigenous people endured inhumane treatment through the labor they were forced to do in the Encomiendas. Arguably then, de la Casas ultimately debated against Encomiendas, by saying that they were enslaving sites that dehumanized the Natives. Even then, when the Spanish Crown finally gave the Natives status of human, they were still seen as peoples that needed to be governed and civilized. As long as the legal human status of the Native's did not interfere with "the crown's colonization plans" they were

protected through legal rights, and “if Indians resisted colonization, however, they were not given any legal rights and could be enslaved” (Menchaca, 53).

Therefore, it was not until their humanity was declared that they were accepted and pushed into transculturation through interbreeding. Their labor, for the most part, was taken up by the enslavement of another that was deemed less than human—a status that the Natives were far to familiar with but after developing their human status became very disconnected from.

I want to raise the question about where do non-human animals fall into the racial hierarchy that has been created. I am trying to understand where does *animal* come in when working through the includable Native body and the “other” in the black body of the enslaved African. If Natives were able to be included into humanity through language, culture, and religion, how was it that the African black body was not? And even so, with the construction of a new race of Natives, their labor was still needed for further acquisition of the land, meaning that they still were viewed as laborable expendable bodies. Meaning that Natives were still marginalized in this new world economy because they were still needed for the reproduction of a new race and for the welfare of a flourishing Mestizo population. Their humanity granted them access to be within welfare laws that looked after their wellbeing. But if they specifically resisted domination, they would easily fall out of the legal status of human. Therefore, the Native body was close to the non-human animal but what made it includable was its ability to adhere and/or navigate the power structure at play. I would argue that black bodies were not able to navigate or make themselves human in a society that built its

humanity on the backs of those that stood in as the default “other” — “other” that was said to be closer to the animal than any other human because of skin color. Ultimately, there was a very thin line that was easily crossed between different racialized humans, but it is also important to demarcate how black individuals were arguably not able to cross into human. Hence, it was the black body that took the place of non-human animals for other human beings but the oppressive aspect of animal exploitation is that animals are seen as the being that can be exploited.

The non-human animal is one that often times gets forgotten when we work through the questions I have just presented above. Non-human animal labor is hardly recognized as such in specific animals and never fully acknowledged in farmed animal work. The questions I pose, are here to help us understand how the non-human animal that often labors for us humans is already included into our society without the proper recognition that they deserve as sentient beings. This is because non-human animals have not been given the human card, not that they would want the human card since it seems to not work for humans either in terms of seeing all humans as deserving “citizens” of society. Bob Torres highlights, in *Making a Killing: The Political Economy of Animal Rights* that:

We directly consume the bodies of animals for food, but we also use them as factories for milk, eggs, and other products; we wear the skins and fur of animals; we use animals for medical and scientific experiments; and we exploit them for the purposes of our entertainment and companionship. Animals have even played a direct role in the development of industrial capitalism, functioning as our property—as chattel slaves—and in this regard, they should be considered part of the working class. (Torres, 9)

Torres is obviously asking of us that we look at animals differently and seeing them for their existence in society as contributors. Contributing not in a way we would think of human contributions, but in the way that humans take and animals are not given a choice. It is obvious that non-human animals work, feed, and dress the human. The Natives, fed (for example, farmed to produce food), worked, and dressed the Spanish. But for some reason it is still hard for humans to look beyond the embodiment of animals in order to understand that they have their own worlds, and we have worlds together. Animals, like some humans, have also been bred to make a specific population that aids in the production of capital. For example, female cows are bred to produce milk, female chickens are bred to produce eggs, specific docile dogs or rodents are bred for animal testing, and animals like elephants and tigers are forced into exploitable entertainment labor. These cycles of forced labor make for these non-human animals to be part of what Torres calls the working class.

However, I object to the term “working class” because it gives the illusion that animals have a choice in working. However, this is not to say that humans have the actual choice either. But just like human-animals some animals do have a "choice" in some sense in that they prefer to collaborate, and that they enjoy their work. Yet, in terms of animal husbandry, animals are already included into our living spaces, raised, and taken care of for capital production, thus why not learn alternative ways of working with them that do not create for the “absent referent” — the erasure of a life in the end product. Josephine Donovan and Carol J.

Adams, in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, use Carol Gilligan's feminist ethic-of-care theory as a way to think through alternative human-animal relationships, "which identifies a women's 'conception of morality' that is 'concerned with the activity of care...responsibility and relationship,' as opposed to a men's 'conception of morality as fairness,' which is more concerned with 'rights and rules' (2). But most importantly, what I gravitate to is that, "care theory resists hierarchal dominative dualisms, which establish the powerful (human, men, whites) over subordinate (animals, women, peoples of color)" (2). Thus, the focus would be on relationships that identify the existence of these inescapable power dynamics, but that are also heavily relied upon for our own human survival. So why not take care of non-human animals the way we take care of humans? I guess if I were asking myself this, I would say that we are already not doing a great job, at all, at taking care of non-normative human people. But to pose this differently, I would look not at hierarchizing oppressions by comparing who deserves better treatment NOW. Instead, I ask that we look at animals we interact with in our lives, whether human or non-human animal, and point to how those relationships can be different if we acted with care. If we follow patriarchal notions of categorizing, we enable separation, and consent to oppression—human or non-human. In its place, I seek a framework that is distinct from these patriarchal notions, in essence that we accept and allow the fact that non-human animals change us as much as we change them. We can see this relationship between human and non-human animals with the experiences of survival as a form of resistance.

What would it mean to think of resistance as manifesting itself within an oppressive context? What would it do for marginalized bodies if we understood resistance in this way? Often times, resistance is seen as a form of taking oneself out of a given system of oppression completely, while at the same time criticizing those that find ways to live within systems of oppression as sell-outs. The all-or-nothing resistance standpoint obliges marginal communities, who are working within the system, to appear as completely and ignorantly complacent to the power structures around them. Thus, this form of resistance does not acknowledge the webs of multifaceted-interworking relationships that sometimes call for compliance as a tool of survival. Consequently, I would argue, resistance is not a black-and-white concept and it is not just a simple answer of yes or no. Resistance is deeply woven in with complicity²². What I call for, credits disenfranchised communities of all species with the intelligence of seeming to adhere to a dominant society, when in fact they have found ways of surviving within a system that was not built to nurture their “othered” identities. Additionally, it is within this very submission to dominant structures that we find alternative ways of resistance, and sometimes being submissive can allow for alternate spaces of functionality and pleasure.

²² In *Imitation and Gender in Subordination*, Butler explains how Foucault conventionalizes resistance always in the context of oppression, “Indeed, a Foucauldian perspective might argue that the affirmation of “homosexuality” is itself an extension of a homophobic discourse. And yet ‘discourse,’ he writes on the same page, ‘can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy’ (Butler, 308).

Resistance can reside in in-between spaces that “anti’s” would not account for. Specifically when thinking about the Natives and the process of transculturation being malleable was not just a quality of the Natives, but also of the Spaniards. Thus, it was the Natives very submission to these systems that enabled co-worldings and the beginning of a new hybrid race. The Natives embodied the survival of their people through their mere existence despite ongoing colonization, while also maintaining a sense of who they were— thus highlighting the complexities that occur within hybrid identities that are ever-changing and in constant motion.

Therefore it is this form of resistance, this idea of surviving within, that I am interested in. I am especially thinking about the possibilities that arise out of certain oppressive relationships. Feminist queer of color scholar, Juana Maria Rodriguez, in *Sexual Futures, Queer Gestures, and Other Latina Longings*, tells us that:

While the types of negation, refusal, masochism, and failure...are indeed part of the everyday forms of social survival that I also wish to signal, I would argue that refusal, destruction, failure, masochism, and negativity are not the absence of sociality; instead they signal the active critical work of engagement and critique that is always already relational. (Rodríguez, 12)

Rodriguez’s critique of everyday survival also accounts for the gratifications that come out of these interdependent relationships, therefore showing how sites of colonization are themselves producing subjects of resistance.

Yet, a more conventional understanding of resistance only accounts for those bodies that radically refuse any and all forms of domestication, control, or confinement²³. Even though this idea intrigues me this work is more invested with forms of resistance that exist in contexts of oppression²⁴. What is important for me is to work through the ways in which specific species are surviving in a system that exploits, abuses, and incarcerates them.

The radical notion of total resistance is that of completely refusing systems of control, domestication, and acculturation. The Taino peoples were among some of those natives that early on resisted. Columbus, however, did not expect any resistance from the Taino since he expected them to be passive because of how they welcomed the Spanish with gifts. Columbus interpreted the gift-giving as a weak characteristic that he believed made the Natives colonizable, for generosity also meant weakness to him. To his surprise that was not the case, for it was early on that the Taino revolted—an attack that was not accounted for by Columbus,

When Columbus left his men in charge of the Navidad, he had no doubt that they would be safe for he perceived the Taino as "a friendly and amiable race". Besides, If the native did become hostile he was certain that his men would overcome them, for the indigenous population was "destitute of weapons, go naked and very cowardly". When he returned to the Navidad, he learnt that the

²³ The common notions of resistance we have, that are also important and just as valid to look at, are those that almost completely resist systems of control by going against any type of domestication or "acculturation." The Taino peoples were among some of those natives that resisted early on. Additionally, resistance looks different, even among different human ethnicities, cultures, and populations, thus I do not assume resistances to look the same in non-human animals. However, a familiar resistance exists in the wild bison when thinking about certain animals that do not allow themselves to be domesticated, controlled, and dominated. This type of American bull bison is known for their aggressive and non-compliant tendencies that make any form of animal husbandry difficult to apply.

²⁴ Eduardo Pavlovsky discusses this in what he has named micro-politics of resistance, in his book *Micropolítica De La Resistencia*. He draws on Foucault to think about resistance in a specific Latin American context.

• • •

Taino had killed all his men in a revolt led by Caonabo, chief of the Maguana, a caciquat in the center of the island. Theft of their property, the rape of their women as well as an awareness that the powerful strangers intended to remain in their island were the main reasons the Taino turned to hostility. (*The Spanish Conquest of the Tainos*)²⁵

I find this story to be revealing of the early occurrences of colonization, and a little ironic as well. Ironic in the sense that Columbus believed that he could leave his men with such “cowardly” peoples, because he had no doubt in his mind that his “superiority” would outsmart any revolt. The Tainos upon realizing all the atrocities that were about to occur, and had started happening, decided fought back. It is said that it was their fighting back and the small pox epidemic that almost wiped out the entire Taino population. But was that really what happened? Or was the account of a wiped-out race just about the “pure” untouched Tainos encountered upon contact? What about the Mestizo population? Are they not Taino enough to be counted in this number? I ask these questions because I want to think about resistance as passing. As living Taino but not necessarily purely embodying the Taino untouched image. Taino in disguise, Taino as “acculturated,” Taino as “white” passing. This is also a resistance that we need to account for, a resistance that arises out of survival.

Can the same or similar propositions be made about non-human animals? Resistance looks different, even among different human ethnicities, cultures, and populations, thus I do not assume resistances to look the same in non-human animals. However, a familiar resistance

²⁵ "Taino Conquest." *Taino Conquest*. Latin American Studies, n.d. Web. 18 Mar. 2016.

exists in the wild bison when thinking about certain animals that do not allow themselves to be domesticated, controlled, and dominated. This type of American bull bison is known for their aggressive and non-compliant tendencies that make any form of animal husbandry difficult to achieve. In addition, stressful situations make the bison more hostile, to the point of injury and death by suicide²⁶. Not only is this an economic loss for the farmer, but it also puts the farmer at risk of injury (Lanier and Grandin). As a result of this, wild bison are often crossbred with cattle in order to pacify them and make easier the process of breeding, raising, and killing. This is because for us humans “reciprocity is part of our romantic illusion about other animals. In spite of, or perhaps because of, having learned through experience that members of our species often don’t reciprocate our kindness, we cling to the belief that members of other species will. Surely they’re purer, simpler, not devious or ungrateful!” (Lott, 153-154) A similar notion of purity and non-deceitfulness is noticed in the way the Spanish perceived the Natives upon contact. There was an expectation for all Native peoples to be generous and compliant because of their first experiences with the Natives. A similar assumption is made of non-human animals where humans expect to be able to conquer any *animal* because of their own perceived superiority.

²⁶ Lanier and Grandin in "The Calming of American Bison (Bison Bison). During Routine Handling" inform us that bison “suicide” happens during intra-herd aggression because of stressful situations that arise out of fear.

It is interesting, as well, how it becomes a game to break and domesticate the wildest animals as a way to affirm and validate the power of human over *animal*. This obsession to control and dominate seems to only serve the purpose of warranting human exceptionalism, rather than transforming human and *animal* relationships. And usually the more one resists, the more murder is used as a threat so that others can be domesticated. As Dale F. Lott tells us, “The bison resists, and the usual technique for overcoming that resistance is to be forceful...most animals can be socially dominated, at least temporarily and at some stages of their lives. This keeps them from getting maimed or murdered in a battle they can’t win” (Lott, 154). Thus, the wild bison represents an animal that resists domestication, and even though farmers are figuring out different methods of domestication in animal husbandry, they (the bison) are still escaping and destroying property. Farmers are becoming desperate to the point that they are even looking into ways of developing low-stress environments that can aid in less violent interactions and actions from the bison. However, the wild bison community might just be the type to fight back until they are extinct because their unmanageability will not stop farmers from trying to meet consumer demand. On the other hand, because of the interbreeding with cattle, the demand for bison will push for a hybrid type of bull that can easily be incorporated and duplicated. Just as the wild bison has its community of resistance, the Taino people have a parallel experience of survival within their identities as human-animals.

We are animals too, as animals are animals. As I showed earlier, *animal* lines are easily blurred depending on how disenfranchised a group of people is at a specific point in history. I would also maintain that humans are animalized every day as a way to excuse their “otherness,” their different status, their non-humanness; mostly for the purpose of exploitation, abuse, and use. However, certain humans, like the Natives were not always seen as human, even though they possessed human bodies. Before being given the human card, Natives were also marginalized to excuse their momentarily enslaved state; but ultimately they were included into the new society. Together, the Spanish and the Natives sought to create a living space that was not all misery and pain, although I am sure this existed as well. But I contend that relationships are not always equal or same in practice. Relationships are complex and are constantly changing because we as *animals* are constantly changing. Thus, even though I acknowledge and clearly understand that there are humans still that are at the margins of the human, I still insist we look at non-human animals as a way to look at human-human relationships differently with more care and understanding. This begins with accepting non-human animals as already here and part of our world. And animal husbandry, which parallels with practices of inclusion, can be a place where we can begin to nurture these relationships. The challenge is to accept the difference between human and non-human animals. We need to work through these differences in order to challenge and deconstruct harmful power structures that seek to destroy difference, rather than include it and learn from

it—and in this case non-human animals represent the difference we need to include and learn from.

MEETING IN THE BORDERLANDS: SPECIESISM AT THE INTERSECTION OF RACISM

In fact, the Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy

—Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands*

It was during a community health event that I began to ask questions about food and our relationship to animals. It did not ever cross my mind that I would walk out of that event questioning my position on vegan and vegetarian lifestyles. Nor did I expect to later make connections between animal and human oppressions in relation to speciesism and racism.

The event was held by a community center that hosted different workshops on healthier ways of eating for the Latinx community. The advertisement for the event seemed to target community members who were interested in doing a body cleanse to bring in the spring season, which was introduced with conversations on vegan ways of eating. I thought this was interesting because my earlier introductions to veganism were in white affluent

neighborhoods and this workshop was taking place in the heart of Los Angeles, with predominantly low-income Latinx neighborhoods. To my surprise, the conversations we were having were centered on plant-based eating and our effects on the environment when consuming meat. The workshop was being facilitated by a Chicano doctor and his wife who lived in the area, which further lured me into asking more questions when the workshop was over. The advice I walked away with was to read the book called *Skinny Bitch*. At first I was uncomfortable with the idea of reading a book that might deal with the patrolling of women's bodies that would reinforce ideal perceptions of beauty. With this in mind I bought the book the next day and trusted that I had more to gain by reading and being critical of the book, than not reading it at all.

I finished the book in two days and became vegan the next. What did vegan mean for me at the time? It meant that I chose not to participate in the deaths of millions of animals by deciding not to consume anything that was animal derived. It meant that I would opt-out of buying anything that was made of leather or fur. It meant that I would not support the zoo or local circuses. For me, it meant choosing to take care of my body and the environment at the same time. "Self explanatory. It's not that hard. Everyone should do it!" I used to say. As you will read later I found out differently.

At the time, I was the only vegan I knew, aside from my partner who became vegan the day after me. At the start I, along with my partner, also thought that vegan meant eating solely raw foods, which in the end was tragic and funny. Tragic because instead of transitioning into

raw eating we went straight for it, not realizing that raw meant not eating any foods that were processed or cooked. Funny, because it was not until 2 weeks before we realized that vegan did not necessarily mean going raw. I remember one evening making a raw ginger vinegar dressing to eat with our kale salad. Little did we know, that kale needs to be massaged with oil before we could consume it happily. This was my initial start, and even though I hated it (given that we were on a raw diet), I continued on my vegan journey, for I knew this was important for me. Next, a common thing newly vegans do, I got into pastas! Easy to make and tasted much better than eating raw, but of course in eating solely carbs I gained 15 pounds, which was also tragic- but I knew this was important to me so I persisted to engage and read.

A year after I became vegan I got swept under the agendas of vegan animal rights (AR) activists in LA. This was exciting for me because I actually was beginning to meet other people alike, so I thought. This excitement, of course did not last long, because most of the people that I was meeting in the AR movement were either white people or white people with money. Yet early on, I didn't question their position in anti-racist politics because I was thinking about saving the animals. I wanted to do anything I could to save a life and I did. I went to every protest, every march, every die-in, and every meeting. Yet, something was always missing. I felt different than the people who were there. I felt that even though we were all in it for the same reasons, something about having no people of color in those spaces made me ask more questions about privilege and access to conversations about animal-human relationships. The issue too did not only deal with access. For the problem was not the AR activists, the problem

was when we would get into conversations about racism and they would not understand oppression when it came to human subjects that were not white. Thus, I began to feel further and further out of place. And finally, something happened during a march that made me question my own vegan “agenda.”

I remember being told that a group of AR activists had organized a protest to shut down a pig slaughterhouse in the middle of Vernon, California. We began our protest as usual by gathering the people and picking up signs that read “THEIR BLOOD IS ON YOUR HANDS.” We chanted and walked along the sidewalk. As I was walking someone made a comment about “illegal” immigrants usually being hired for “those” jobs; “those jobs”, meaning that someone was assigned the job of legal murder and most likely it was undocumented people who were hired. Something about this comment made me so angry and sad at the same time. I asked myself, what am I really doing here? What will happen to all the workers if we actually get this place shut down? Am I on the right side of the fence, I mean I am undocumented too? What if I needed to support my family and this was the only job that paid under the table? Also, what did this mean when the week before I was attending a march fighting for immigration reform? I began to ask questions that people around me were not asking. Instead, the people around me were demonizing those workers for not having their morals “straight,” and blaming them directly for the millions of animal deaths that happen everyday.

Thus, once again I was left with more questions and more confused about where I stood. Did I have to pick a side, marginalized human subjects or non-human animals? The more I thought about it the more I realized that I do not have to choose a side because both are much interconnected. I then began reading books like *The Politics of Meat* by Carol Adams to begin to understand the connection between women's oppression and non-human animal oppression. Adam's work was my segue into ways of looking at intersectional oppressions that include speciesism. I began to notice that non-human animals often times stood in as proxy's of oppression. However, I was still unsatisfied with Adam's approach to speciesism. Not only was she really not delving into the complexities of racialized female bodies and their connections to being animalized but she was also a white woman producing the work. And as a white woman, her negligence of not talking about race as intersection only seemed privileged. Interestingly, although her whiteness might have granted her access to academia, it was the very access to these knowledges that raise questions about the limitations she might have had in challenging racism within anti-speciesist discourses as a non-person of color. Why are most works on critical animal studies written by white scholars? What are we missing? This is not to say that white scholars should not produce work on intersectionality. Instead, this should lead us to ask why people of color are not choosing to engage with questions of the "animal." At the same time that I was reading her work I was also reading Peter Singer's theory of speciesism, which too was not enough having been written from a place of privilege. And, after further analyzing him I do not agree with his idea of ethics as a way to end animal

...
suffering. However, Singer and Adam's reminds me that writing happens in places of privilege because disenfranchised people do not have the resources or the time to produce such work. Thus, thanks to reading both their works I was able to find the space and the vocabulary that I needed to move forward in my endeavors.

After all of this, I am only assured that I have a complex identity, as do most humans I believe, that intersect with different systems of oppression, which allows me space to ask more questions about how identity shapes our relations to systems of oppression. Which is why I am engaging with conversations of speciesism needing to be included in frameworks of intersectionality because it deals with the most marginalized group, one that is not even considered a sentient species. Instead, they are viewed as objects and property values. We must not ignore that this was the state of women and black and brown bodies at one point. We can even argue that racialized bodies are animalized bodies. Which leads me to the questions that will guide my work throughout: Why are conversations on non-human animal treatment mostly centered in white affluent circles? How have popular animal rights narratives shaped exclusionary frameworks that perpetuate racist and classist ideologies? How does the history of colonized bodies shape the way brown and black communities deflect from seeing how non-human bodies are also oppressed? What can we learn about racist and speciesist agendas when looking at them through an intersectional and inter-informing approach? Why are most works produced on this topic mostly written by white scholars? What are people of color saying about human-animal relationships and what is their approach to speciesism?

These are but some of the many questions I have and seek to explore in my work. Yet, as I continue my work on this topic I am always conflicted about my own identity in the process, especially, when my Latina identity as being defined too close to home. Home being far away from acknowledging the animal-human relationship and our shared oppressions. Although I have always known I occupy this liminal space- both literal in terms of my undocumented status and imaginary in terms of being a brown Latina at a college setting- this research is creating room that is allowing me to move from one concept to another, exploring fields that are foreign in thought to others but so closely related to me. Thus, enabling me to occupy a space that tries to bridge nature and culture, human and non-human relationships, anti-oppression discourse and anti-speciesism frameworks, and my own identity as I write on a topic that has mostly been written by white scholars. As I hone in Anzaldua, my connection to human and animal relationships is one that is liminal in the process of writing, because of how hard it is to write about animals with human language. But this relationship is one that also “shrinks with intimacy” because they both are really close to home-home being my identity and my oppression. Thus, no longer is my relationship to veganism one that seeks to have all the answers, but more of one that looks to explore the complexities, nuances, gaps, and emotions of a field that is just beginning to make “dreaded comparisons.” Also, I confess, that for selfish reasons I want to trace and find where my identity meets the animal, in relation to my Mexican culture and our historical relationships to other non-human species.

As a feminist scholar I want to state my position in this topic. Consequently, because of my identity as a Latina woman of color I have always felt that I occupied this space on the margins of society, similar to that of non-human animals. As I grew to learn more about non-human animals I began to question the absence of their “voice” when thinking about their pains, about their oppression, and about their rights to pursue happiness. While I felt indebted to acknowledge their lives, I also sensed the responsibility to do right by being more conscious about marginalized groups when talking about speciesism. While I do not intend to have answers, I do seek to create space to discuss the interlocking oppressions that exist among non-human animals and racialized humans. Thus seemingly, this chapter will focus on my interests in race and non-human animals in relation to the animal rights movement and their poorly thought out or even misinformed tactics to this notion of “liberation.” I will do this by analyzing a campaign by *People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals* (PETA), called “Animal Liberation Project.”

In 2005, PETA’s campaign called “Animal Liberation Project,” raised an upheaval in certain communities of color because of the advertisements that compared the enslavement of humans to the enslavement of animals. Since the days of slavery, black people have refuted and fought hard not to be seen as animals because their oppression was enabled and made possible through being subjugated as the “others,” the animals. The “animal” being the ultimate “other” in Judeo-Christian discourses. However, new discourses on speciesism have not only made comparisons between humans and animals but have asserted that speciesism

has to be acknowledged as an intersection along with racism, classism, ageism, sexism, and ableism, in order to fully understand oppression. Feminist Maneesha Deckha is a post-humanist theorist that has talked about the importance of intersection including species, specifically focusing on the connections between racism and speciesism. Deckha's analysis of inclusion allows us to move away from the fear of being compared to animals, because historically, those who have oppressed people of color have often compared those human persons to animals. By insisting that humans are completely separate from animals, marginalized communities are not acknowledging that the oppression of non-human animals informs the nature of subjugating racialized human subjects. Thus, when members of the African American community deny their paralleling oppressions to that of animals, they are reinforcing human hierarchies in addition to maintaining their own dehumanization.

PETA's campaign was trying to address the subjugated state of animals through the historical context of slavery. However, they did not exactly give context to their choice of pictures. PETA did not comment how white Anglos in the United States enslaved black people from Africa. As an animal rights activist, I can assume that PETA takes an anti-slavery position, yet, black community members who are not in the movement are only able to assume that PETA is using the history of black oppression to build on their political movement of animal liberation—this was what angered the black community. Not only did this seem racist coming from a white run organization but it also pushed further away any allyship with the African American community whose agenda is to fight for anti-racist ideologies. While the

“Animal Liberation Project” was supposed to generate sympathy from individuals for the enslavement of animals by putting side by side a picture of an elephant and an African American person, both chained, the case was that black people that had a history of enslavement did not endorse it and made sure to rally against it.

African American communities protested against PETA’s campaign by saying that PETA was using racist tactics to undermine the experiences of human slavery. However, the idea that this was racist came from a place of viewing elephants’ lives as less valuable than humans. Thus, this campaign and its protesters paved way to questions about life and whose life is more valuable. But the question then lies on why should we perpetuate systems of hierarchies, when it was ideas of status and authority that paved way for the subjugated state of African Americans? Thus, it was the campaign’s ignorance and the neglect of understanding oppression from the African American community that I would say that this was a downfall for both the animal rights movement and the black liberation movement, because the point at hand was not to perpetuate the same value system that enabled human slavery. Consequently, it appeared that black people were not going to support a movement that defended the rights of animals when they themselves were still fighting for their own “humanity.” Similarly, other animal rights groups stood with PETA and sought to defend the campaign from being taken down because they assumed that black people’s anger came from speciesist sentiments. While it was apparent that they both stood on two different sides, the fact was that they were both fighting for the livelihood and rights to pursuit of happiness. Even though we cannot say that

these are exact-same forms of slavery, we can still draw upon the paralleling oppressions that animals continue to face in comparison to the racist practices that were once used on the African American community.

PETA has not been the only one to make such comparisons between race and species oppressions. Deckha, through feminist post-humanist theory, has been instrumental in demonstrating the importance in recognizing power structures that exist beyond sex and species binaries.



Enslaved (2005)

Historically, critical animal study discourses have tended to create parallels between animals and women, while dismissing race as an intersection, or not focusing solely on race-species subjugations. In general, feminist conversations, which claim to strive for intersectional approaches, are dismissing or neglecting to tackle harder conversations that deal with race and species. Binary discourses can be problematic because they follow the heteronormative way to pivot one's experience on another; this dismissing both complex identities and historical oppressions. To stress that only women are affected by the oppression of animals continues to dismiss crucial dialogues that need to happen between race and species discourses. The problem is not so much that race is not in dialogue with critical animal studies; the problem is that scholars have a hard time with introducing speciesism to anti-racist discourses because of

sentiments that are left from the historical oppression of black people. However, ignoring that such similarities exist is not conducive to either's oppressions nor does it challenge the binary argument of sex and species.

Deckha further explores the problem of engendering a sex-species argument that perpetuates a hierarchy that enables oppressions. For she says in, "Toward a Postcolonial, Posthumanist Feminist Theory: Centralizing Race and Culture in Feminist Work on Nonhuman Animals", that, "A primary component of this type of argumentation points to the critical role played by Cartesian dualistic norms and ways of thinking, which have been instrumental in structuring hierarchies and oppressions among human groups, in justifying the human subjugation and oppression of animals" (528). Such degrading implications can be seen when we look at human and non-human discourses. When we talk about non-human animals we are clomping together all species, thus assuming they are all the same in their experiences. When in fact there is more diversity in non-human species than there is in human species. When naming non-human animals, one is assuming that human is above all "other" species—here is where we see how dual arguments serve to perpetuate and reinforce power hierarchies. Additionally, Deckha seeks to reestablish new ways of conversing about species by moving away from the current discourses that reintroduce sex-species arguments. A sex-species standpoint dismisses how race affects the way people of color were and continue to be oppressed. Deckha's analysis of the sex-species binary argument challenges us to bring into the conversation a more intersectional approach that provokes and integrates "structural axes

of race and culture” (Deckha 527). Acknowledging that speciesism also informed and continues to inform the oppression of blacks is crucial in broadening our ideas of racist and speciesist ideologies.

Even though current forms of raising awareness between black and animal oppressions appear to be racist because of the lack of historical context not being presented, the fact is that animals suffer similar victimizations of slavery. One of which seems very present in the animal experience is the objectification of their bodies that stems directly from their property status. Marjorie Spiegel, in *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery*, presents similar oppressions that black and non-human bodies have been subjected to through tracing the objectification of enslaved blacks to animals in current society. While African Americans were already deemed “beasts” under the eyes of their masters, branding usually took place to preserve their objectified state. Slaveholders used branding as a way of labeling their property to keep track of slaves and their families. In our current system of animal husbandry, it is also common for cows to be branded to keep track of the numbers being sent to slaughter, while also ensuring their production rate. Both blacks and animals in this case were valuable because of their monetary status that was profitable to their slave-owners. Spiegel elaborates on this point, when he says, “He must already view them as lesser to himself, perhaps so much his lesser that he has denied the importance of their feelings, or actually can no longer think of them as having any feelings at all. To him they have become merely a means to his profitable end” (85). Spiegel speaks to the process by which animal and black bodies have been

objectified. It begins with the viewing of the being as less than, as other than “human” life, which leads to subjecting the “other” in ways that brings profit, like exploitable labor and forced reproduction.

In order for the production of labor to remain sustainable, slaves were forced to reproduce offspring to continue the cycle of involuntary labor. Once the offspring was born, mothers were not allowed to breast feed their young because of the fear that the women would get attached to their babies and try to rebel when their son/daughter was being sent to be sold at a slave auction. Cows, too, face a similar kind of forced reproduction except that they bring their owner’s more profit by the milk that they produce after giving birth. Consequently, cows are bred for many more reasons than slaves during their time. They are bred for their milk, for their labor, their skin, their meat, and their ability to reproduce—ultimately, they are bred because every part of their bodies brings some profit, and even their dead bodies provides an end product for revenue. Carol Adam’s, in *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*, has called the meat (the end product) of the animal the absent referent. The absent referent is when the animal is converted into a thing from a being, and there is an absence of the life in the finishing product of the meat. However, this absence is “there” already in the living cow, when she/he has no name, no gender, and is referred to as “how many heads of livestock do you have.” Thus, “The absent referent permits us to forget about the animals as an independent identity; it also enables us to resist efforts to make animals present” (Adams 66). Even though Adams is talking about meat, specifically in this quote, this

can be implied to other ways that we see absence of life in “products” of animals. When someone drinks cow milk they are not conscious that in order for that milk to exist a cow had to be forcibly impregnated and separated from her young. Cow milk is able to exist only when a mother cow gives birth. When the mother cow can no longer provide milk for profit, she is sent to slaughter—the cycle of this violence is absent in meat and dairy consumption.

Similarly, slaves were kept as long as they could work, once they were not able to do so anymore, they were sold. While the oppressions of blacks and animals are not identical it is hard to deny that they both have been subjected to similar oppressions. For Spiegel quotes:

This is not intended to over simplify matters and imply that the oppression experienced by blacks have taken identical forms- but, as divergent as the cruelties and supporting systems of oppression may be, there are commonalities between them. They share the same basic relationship- that between oppressor and oppressed. (28)

The question then lies in what are the ramifications when black populations do not see they too are in a place where they are oppressing. Not acknowledging that one too is an oppressor continues the cycle of ignorance and reinforces power structures that allow for oppression to occur.

Though marginalized groups try to move further away from being associated to non-human animals, the actuality is that there is a system in place that has already positioned them in a repressed state by casting them as less than human by associating them to animals—animals being the backdrop of their oppression. As African Americans continue to disassociate themselves from animals, they are thus reinforcing the human and animal hierarchy. I am not

saying the African Americans have placed themselves in the hierarchy to begin with, but not acknowledging the control that one has on top of a hierarchal structure only serves to reinforce the race and non-human animal inferiority. Accepting and not questioning one's privileged position can seem as good as condoning the rights (this can mean literal rights or rights to life) one group has over another group. African Americans, in this case, have not only denied such paralleling oppressions but have chosen not see beyond the scope that offends them, that which compares them to animals. But what is so awful about being compared to an animal? I understand that making rough comparisons without an explanation can seem racist coming from a white run organization, such as PETA; however what I do not understand is how one can still choose not see to their involvement in the oppression of a species that does not belong to the human one.

The human-animal hierarchy is thus reinforced when African American communities use animals to prove their "humanity" to white Anglo-Saxons that have privilege and control over black lives. The problem, in this situation is not the animal, but the white Anglo-Saxon who dominated and conquered black bodies because of instilled beliefs of white supremacy. Yet, African Americans perpetuate similar forms of control and domination in the naming of "animals" as less valuable than humans, and less worthy of being compared to a human life. The hierarchy seems to function both to benefit the group with power and privileged groups as well, such as, white serves to privilege the Anglo-Saxon race, as African American serves to privilege the human race. Lori Gruen has called Spiegel's idea of the "relationship between

the oppressor and the oppressed,” the ‘logic of domination’ that operates to reinforce sexism and other forms of prejudicial oppression and supports the exploitation of non-human animals” (Gruen, 335-336). The logic of domination works to bolster one group’s oppression in order to move away from being the oppressed. Interestingly, instead of functioning to deconstruct hierarchies of domination, the disassociating from non-human animals serves to reinforce them.

Ultimately, there is a relationship in the shared oppression between non-human animals and African American slaves. Social and institutional racism that existed—and currently exists differently—allowed and enabled the enslavement of black bodies. Similar systems of oppression are applicable for animals today. Socially, we condone the death and use of animals because of our belief in human superiority. As humans, we have placed animals at the bottom of a hierarchy that has allowed us to build our economy, our food, our clothing, and practically almost anything on the backs and lives of animals. When an animal cannot even be seen as nothing more than our object of use, then what can we expect when certain humans are paired with such a group? How can we expect to value life, when we as humans are selective of which lives matter? Comparably, the black lives that do not matter, are the ones our society has treated as “animal”—animal the lowest, most degraded, and whose lives are most denied. Thus, even though PETA might have furthered black people away from this realization, Spiegel’s book is able to draw us back to these comparisons, which are not easy to talk about, but need to happen in order to understand the subjugation of those non-human

animals whose oppression our society continues to deny. As Anzaldua says, it is only when we are made to feel uncomfortable about our position in society, as humans in relation to animals, that we can truly understand the root of oppression. Thus by seeing that, "the space between two individuals (animal and human) shrinks with intimacy," can we actually recognize our own oppression. And only then can we actually actively resist it, both as being a subject of oppression but also as being the oppressor.

LABORING BODIES AND DECOLINZING FOOD

I was born in Guadalajara Jalisco, Mexico and came to the United States at the age of 6. Growing up mi papi always told me, “Somos Mexicanos hija, y algun día vamos a regresar.” At the time I had no idea what that meant for me or why he even said that, for in my head I used to say “Yo soy del El Salvador.” Early on I identified as Salvadorian because my mami is Salvadoreña and I connected more with her, hence that meant I was Salvadoreña, y nadie me sacaba de ahí.

I learned I was undocumented the semester of my senior year and that my dad was also on the same boat. It was not until that point that it became clear to me why he always said Mexico was my home, because no matter how hard core Salvadorian I said I was, I was still born in Mexico, and in Mexico I would end up if I got deported.

As time went by, I began to identify more with my native country. The exclusion and isolation that I felt from this country made me realize why I was Mexican and why I began to identify as being Mexican. Taking on this identity in my late teens and into the now means I have pride in my Mexican culture, which includes musica, dance, telenovelas, and most importantly food. Food was at the center of every family gathering, holiday, birthday party, funeral, and church congregation. Mamí would say, “Mira Patricia, if you don’t eat, te me vas a enfermar.” Food was also the marker of wealth and having good health.

Food became especially important when my parents separated. My dad's lack of involvement in my life seemed to be mediated during the once a month visits when my stepmom and him made food to welcome my brothers and I. For some reason my dad thought that having mole, quesadillas, posole, and carnitas would make up for the times he was not around. All that the food made up for was the nasty American food that my mami was learning to cook when she married my stepdad.

As I got older, I looked forward to the visits with my dad and especially the food he made. As I matured into adulthood I began to appreciate the time and money that came into putting meals together. I learned that my dad's job in the garment industry was always up and down, and sometimes getting any type of food on the table was a luxury. This realization also explained why papi hardly ever came around when I was growing up. Making ends meet meant not having weekends for my brothers and I. As time passed, food was also at the epicenter of storytelling and learning about my roots, which later became the fuel for this project.

Then the day came. The day when I had to tell my dad why I did not eat his famous carnitas and his cheese tamales. Actually, that's not at all how the story went. I actually did eat the tamales and not the carnitas the first few times I remember going to visit when I was already vegan. I could not come to terms with telling my dad, "Papi soy vegana." It felt like I was coming out of the closet again, but for some reason this closet was harder to step out of²⁷. However, that day I did explain to my dad that I would not be eating anything animal derived. Me miro como que si yo me converti loca. First, he gave me this long lecture about how I need to eat meat and that in Mexico cows are not treated like here in the U.S. He went on to say that "maybe I need to go to Mexico to eat meat where animals are treated with dignity." At first I thought my papi was being insensitive, however what I was not realizing was how I

²⁷ The first closet I am referring to, the first closet I stepped out of, is the lesbian closet.

had altered one of the only ways that my dad might have been able to relate to me—his Mexican born daughter now “white-washed” through vegan ethics.

But was being vegan really American? Had I been deeply indoctrinated by American colonial values that I was allowing myself to traicionar mis raises? As I became part of the vegan world I began to ask more questions that to this day I still do not know how to answer. But what I do know is that I will not allow popular narratives by white Anglos to erase the intersecting oppressions of human marginalized bodies and non-human animals. I want to draw attention to these narratives that need not to be viewed as opposing realms, but instead, need to be reconciled through facing our common oppressor. Consequently then, I plan to highlight the interlocking oppressions of non-human animal and human laboring bodies by looking at specific productions of food to show how there are profound implications for discussions of power and powerlessness. Thus, it is necessary to analyze “our” shared exploitation through a postcolonial, anti-racist, and anti-speciesist lens in order to move away from colonial practices of power that perpetuate and enable human oppression.

In this chapter I plan to ask questions on laboring bodies and the systems that exploit and use these bodies. I will begin by illustrating colonial practices and beliefs seeded in English settler notions of manifest destiny that have allowed for the hierarchy of the human and “other” non-human animal. I will specifically focus on the subjugation of Mexicans through tracing a history that has constructed their “otherness” as (sub) human beings. Additionally, I will bring in two examples of exploited labor, both human and non-human animal to draw attention to their similar experiences as subjects of oppression. And finally, as part of my decolonization process, I will use José Esteban Muñoz’s concept of disidentification to rework traditional Mexican recipes that will speak to a conscious way of consumption and reclamation of native practices. Throughout my paper, I will also be using Gloria Anzaldúa’s notions of the borderland to move away from rigid identifications, by decentralizing the

human and begin to include the non-human animal. Consequently, it is important to acknowledge how both are mutually reinforcing and sustaining colonial practices of domination that are created so that it makes it hard for us to not see their interconnectedness. And I would argue that there is more danger in ignoring shared oppressions, than it is to make our shared experiences visible.

Before I delve into the history of Mexicans as colonial subjects, I want to first establish and conceptualize colonialism and its overlapping structures of supremacy and control. One radical definition that speaks to European-English colonialism that I find useful to begin with is one that states that, “Settler colonialism ultimately depends on an exclusive concept of nation based on control and ownership of land and territory that demarcated borders” (Walia, xiii). While I like this definition there is still a major piece missing, and that is how power functions through superior and inferior somatic bodies. Additionally, one can argue that colonialism begins with a body of people that claim superiority to excuse and facilitate the exploitation and/or eradication of a certain population that they have deemed less than human, as portrayed by Spanish colonialism and their practices of incorporation through exploitation. Which is also tied to the extraction and control of resources on behalf of the party that has the authoritative power. This is specially noticed in Spanish colonialist practices of exploitation, abuse, and control, which aided in granting certain accesses to goods. All of which support the superior status of a group while maintaining the subjugated status of the “other.” Yet, instead of being questioned and rearticulated in a manner that challenges colonialist ways of domination, hierarchies are reinforced through speciesist and racist practices, and perpetuated through dominant power structures like institutions. Thus, these colonizing structures naturalize the subjugation of the “other,” through perpetually making invisibility such occurrences²⁸. This desensitizing process—the process of not wanting to know or acknowledge the oppressive state of the “other”—often becomes a ethical necessity

²⁸ Not just in conversations of colonialism, but also in the negation of the non-human animal as been subjected to oppression.

of ignorance, in order to make sense of the realization that everyone benefits from the oppressive state of the “other,” whether human or non-human animal. For “Power is a mobile part of every relation, Foucault argues; the rationality and logic behind power relations are not directed and controlled by specific individuals or groups but, rather, operate through strategies that can exercise power or counter it (1980)” (Tomlinson, 255). According to Foucault, power is everywhere and everyone is implicated in systems of oppression. Power is enforced through minute instances and actions; fragmented and distributed in multiple ways, that finding the main source of oppression is impossible. Because power is inextricable from one source it makes it hard to pin point the oppressor, however, it is our duty to question where we fall under hierarchies of power and figure out how to resist and challenge them.

According to scholars like, Laura E. Gomez in *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race*, Mexicans experienced what she would call a double colonization, first from Spain and then from the United States of America (Gomez, 20). Both the Spaniards and the English took ownership of a land that was already inhabited by its native people. Indians were what the Spaniards called the people of the land; Indians, according to them needed the aid of a superior race to teach them how to evolve into “civilized” subjects²⁹. This was done through years of Catholic indoctrination and enslavement of Indian bodies in *encomiendas* (Menchaca, 25). Missions played a major part in pacifying and acculturating the Indians. The church protested against lifelong slavery policies and instead proposed a pacification strategy that converted natives to Catholicism³⁰. They created missions at every settlement and once a day took a Holy Cross to the center of the community and made the Indians pray with them. As missions grew to Christianize Indians, other natives, such as the Apache resisted and the Navajo’s moved far north. Eventually, some of these missioned Indians were afforded certain rights

²⁹ In the Crossroads chapter I note that Columbus would send these messages to the crown in order to get more support and funding. This was in spite of his infatuation and romantization of the Indian peoples.

³⁰ This I mention and emphasize as a form of incorporation and domestication—one that is different than English colonization.

• • •

during the Southwest conquest by the United States as a result of their double colonization that informed their pacified state. However, the “humanity” of the missioned Indian, during Spanish conquest, and the Mexican, during English conquest, was always up for debate even when the U.S. seized their lands.

Manifest destiny, according to the U.S., was the idea that Americans had an obligation and a given right for expansion. Historian Reginald Horsman illustrated that:

In the middle of the nineteenth century a sense of racial destiny permeated discussion of American progress and of future American world destiny . . . By 1850 the emphasis was on the American Anglo-Saxons as a separate, innately superior people who were destined to bring good government, commercial prosperity and Christianity to the American continents and to the world. This was a superior race, and inferior races were doomed to subordinate status or extinction. (Gomez, 3-4)

Mid-nineteenth century marked the time when the U.S. and Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe after the U.S. moved to colonize the Southwest. This treaty was supposed to grant citizenship to Mexican’s that lived in the Southwest under United States law. Instead, these rights were not protected and Mexicans became victims of racialized violence. The history of Mexico is one that is often forgotten and erased in the midst of discourses that only view racist violence through a black and white lens³¹. An important part of this history that is often ignored and one that needs to be reclaimed is the one that recognizes that Mexican bodies were also subjects of white supremacy through practices of lynching. Ultimately, according to William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, “the lynching of Mexicans was one of the mechanisms by which Anglos consolidated their colonial control of the American West” (Carrigan and Webb, 73). The practice of lynching highlights how a group in power can become desensitized to the deaths of those they have constructed as “other” and the murder of that being only becomes a symbol

³¹ —A binary among others that I am looking to move away from.

of fear that reinforces the power of white hegemony. Their death then is seen as the ultimate sacrifice, one that needed to happen to maintain the social order of its time.³²

One can argue that we are seeing a similar manifestation illustrate itself through the treatment of animals in slaughterhouses. In the U.S. alone in 2014, 2.9 billion farm animals were killed in the agriculture business (“Farm Animal Statistics: Slaughter Totals”). Deaths ranged from ducks, to chickens, to turkeys, to cows, and to hogs. This is not taking into account rabbits or other smaller animals that are used for different purposes for the like of the human. Are the deaths of these billions of animals considered murder or are they “sacrificial” to support the centering of the human being? According to Christian scriptures, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (“Genesis,” *King James Version*). This scripture is often read and used as a way to excuse the deaths of billions of farmed animals. Not only does this passage speak to the idea that “man” was made in God’s image and thus is given Godly attributes of superiority and dominion, but it also shows how often times in the image of God, death is excusable and murder becomes the hand of God- God being the man, the white man, and the human. Consequently, belief’s of manifest Destiny parallels this view of having the “God given right” to conquer and dominate a certain body that is viewed as less than.

The white “man” would not exist without the construction and perpetual (re) production of its opposite, the brown and black subject. Similarly, human exceptionalism thrives and constructs itself against the image of the non-human animal. Then it is fair to say that racist ideologies mirror a speciesist hierarchy. Instead of viewing these two forms of oppression as unrelated, we should begin to ask more questions about the paralleling subjugation between marginalized human bodies and non-human

³² However, this is not to say that I support this form of social order, but rather that it was the public disposability of Mexicans that sealed notions of white supremacy.

animals. We can gain more from questioning systems of power rather than ignoring and pretending that they are not a problem for non-human animals as well. In the next paragraphs I present some concrete examples of human and non-human animal exploitation through looking at the laboring bodies of Mexican farm workers and dairy cows.

According to the *National Farm Worker Ministry*, farm workers work in the fields about 42 hours a week- 2 hours too many to be over the normal 40 hours a week desk job (“Low Wages”). Farm workers are among one the most exploited workers in the nation. Workers usually work over 8 hours a day in the hot sun, with



“Produce Worker” (*Food Empowerment Project*)

few or no breaks. Some workers have a steady salary, whereas other farm workers get paid per each produce box they are able to generate. Ofelia Chavez, a 40 year old undocumented farmworker from Madera California, says that, “Tomatoes are the worst paid: I’ll pick 100 for 62 cents a bucket, or about \$62 a day. I don’t do tomatoes much anymore. It’s heavy work, you have to bend over, run to turn in your baskets, and your back hurts. I say I like tomatoes — in a salad. Ha” (Smiley, "Farm Confessional: I'm an Undocumented Farm Worker - Modern Farmer"). Ofelia, wakes up between 3 and 4 in morning, and is at the fields by 6am. She works all morning until about one o’clock where she takes a short break before she goes back to work. As she mentioned, she chooses not to pick tomatoes anymore because

being a tomato picker is poorly paid. Ofelia is one of many undocumented workers in the field who actually has the ability to make that choice. Some people work picking tomatoes all day from 6am to 5pm in the afternoon with few breaks in between. Not to mention that workers are out in the sun all day, are exposed to dangerous equipment, working environments are harsh, they are subjected to unhealthy pesticides and chemical sprays, and their housing situations are usually unhygienic and cruel (Goldfarb). Even though, Ofelia jokes about only liking tomatoes in her salad, we know that she is obviously aware of the dangers of working in the fields, for she later mentions that she is surprised she has not had health issues.

Labor is the intense physical use of the body for processes of production. Production is a process by which a “good” is manufactured and made ready to be put out for consumers. In the process of production, usually what is forgotten or unaccounted for is the actual labor that went into the “product.” The bodies that were physically used do not get acknowledged. The laboring subjects become the ghost in the machine—the body being the machine, something not living, but always producing. The actual sentient lives of those bodies, their families, and their ability to feel pain and loss vanish, as the individual becomes the instrument of production. Hardland Padfield and William E. Martin in *Farmers, Workers and Machines: Technological and Social Change in Farm Industries in Arizona*, say that, “We all know that pairs of hands are connected with a breathing reality of families seeking reasonable comfort and happiness. We know that, and yet this reality seems to fade from our thoughts once we begin to talk about matters of production and labor supply” (Padfield and Martin, xi). Padfield and Martin highlight how working hands act on behalf of families and survival. Yet, those very morals of family and life, one that the United States prides itself on, gets lost in the production of capital.

Feminist scholar, Carol Adams would describe the above as the absent referent. In her book, *The Sexual Politics of Meat* she describes the absent referent as:

Animals in name and body are made absent as animals for meat to exist. Animals' lives precede and enable the existence of meat. If animals are alive they cannot be meat. Thus a dead body replaces the live animal. Without animals there would be no meat eating, yet they are absent from the act of eating meat because they have been transformed into food. (Adams, 66)

Even though Adams is specifically referring to non-human animals, the same point could be made for

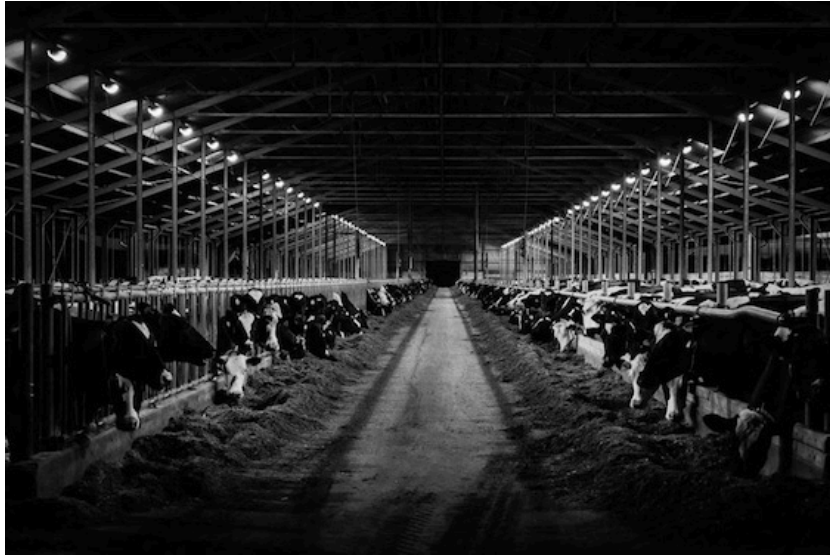
farm workers. This does not mean that if we stopped hiring farm workers that people would not have vegetables. However, we cannot dismiss that fact that the laboring that comes along with productions of consumerism is absent when the meat or/and vegetable arrives on the plate. Thus, a laboring body replaces the live animal body-human and non-



'Huron Mireles, 31, a herdsman at Norm-E-Lanes, walks past dairy cows in one of the barns at the farm on July 11, 2012'
(Koran, M. and Keapproth, L., 2012)

human. This is not to say, that we do not live in a society that constantly requires us to

produce. However, bodies that "labor" are constantly working without having the time to live life outside of that work. Not to mention, the unstable mental and physical health of these individuals that often goes unattended, as the product becomes more important than the body that it's killing.



“The Truth About Milk” (Miles, 2015)

Yet, there is a hierarchy that brands certain bodies more valuable and worthy than others, and while we might not agree with the treatment of farm workers, we somehow still excuse this for the use of animal bodies, like dairy cows. Usually in the dairy industry in order for a female cow to produce milk she has to be artificially impregnated by the farmer. This is not always the case for it can be done naturally, but artificial insemination is the method often used for (re) production. She usually has her first calf at the age of two and will continue to be impregnated until she can no longer produce anymore milk, which means she will work about 5-7 years as a dairy cow (“Dairy Cattle Information”). She, same as a human body, is pregnant for 9 months. After giving birth, every time after, her new born will be taken from her, without having the ability to nurse her young. Time and time again, the value is placed on the ability of being able to keep producing. The ailing body of the calf who wants the milk of its mother and the mother who cries for her young does not matter- family care ethics becomes absent over and over again. Greta Gaard, in “Toward a Feminist Postcolonial Milk Studies,” in her research found that tearing apart the bond of a mother cow and her calf caused for both of them to have “emotional,

behavioral, and biological distress” (Gaard, 611). Interestingly, society’s family values do not transfer over to the way we understand and treat the relationship of a mother cow and her young, because the cow is viewed as a non-sentient being. In other words, a cow is just an “animal,” which “is” not capable of feeling the pains of separation³³. It is important to also note that there is a similar undervaluing of family, in cases of immigration, where laws justify family separations. In addition, after 5-7 years of work, when a dairy cow is done producing (milk) profit for the farmer, she will be sent away for slaughter as low-grade meat. Throughout the process, she was just a machine, that once she stopped “working” she became disposable. And although I want to say that she was disposable since the beginning, because of everything she had to endure, the truth is she was not because everything about her was production, and production as money is not disposable in a capitalist society. Even her disposable body becomes profit through the selling of her flesh. Every part of her, from her milk, to her young, and to her female body, all are means of production valued because of its worth to yield.

What is important, as we move forward, is to recognize that in every struggle we find resistance, for both human and non-human animal. Because most of the stories we hear about resistance are not about animals, I will specifically tell the story of a mother cow and her calf. Her resistance is reflective of her strong sense of kinship, one that “us” humans are too familiar with. Gaard in her work, tells the story of a mother cow, who I will refer to as Tonantzin³⁴ and her two calves. As previously mentioned, when dairy cows are separated from their newborn they often wail and hit their bodies against the fences that constrain them. In this one case Tonantzin was not caged in and was able to give birth outside on fields of high grasses. She had given birth to twins. Given her prior history with the farmer, Tonantzin knew that she would lose her offspring once the farmer realized she had given birth. Instead of waiting

³³ This idea of non-sentient resonates with the non-humanness in Indians as proposed in the earlier chapter.

³⁴ I purposely choose to name the unnamable, the *animal*, Tonantzin—an Aztec Goddess, “Mother Earth”, and “Our Great Mother.”

for the farmer to come, she decided to take one of her calves over to him. But to our surprise she only brought over one of her offspring and kept the other hidden, for she knew that the farmer only expected a calf. Everyday as usual she went over to the farmer to get milked and everyday she went back to the high grasses to feed her hidden baby. Tonantzin made a conscious choice to give up one of her calves to save the other. She consciously kept working to not draw unwanted attention. The farmer eventually found the calf and sent him away to be sold into the veal industry. Tonantzin's story shows how you do not need to be a human to mourn, or feel pain, how you do not have to be human to need and want the warmth of your new baby, and how you do not need to be human in order to make a difficult decision that might save one of your children. Who is to say that Tonantzin does not have paralleling values of love and relationship similar to humans? She, like other humans, is a subject of capitalism. But unlike humans, her body will perish and become the ultimate sacrifice.

 Laboring bodies are what fuel and sustain capitalism and in slaughterhouses both human and non-human laboring bodies meet. These are jobs that need to be filled and there are specific marginalized bodies to fill them because of the way our system is set-up. According to the *United States Department of Labor (2010)*, 75% of farm workers were born in Mexico and 53% of all respondents were not authorized to work in the United States. Which means that more than half of farm workers are undocumented. On this same note, about 38% of workers in slaughterhouses are also foreign born (*Food Empowerment Project*). In addition, people of color from low-income communities also make up a large proportion of those workers. The people who perform this work are also laboring bodies that are trained to partake in a specific part of the killing process. Each worker is trained in one part of the procedure, anything from the actual killing to the bleeding process. These workers make the absent referent possible as they make animal bodies into fragmented meat parts that make it easier for consumers to disassociate from the dead animal on their plate, and also for workers to dissociate from their own acts.

Interestingly, capitalism is a functioning model that is extracting the value from both these disenfranchised bodies. Both the human body and animal body are being depleted differently to allow capitalism to succeed. Unlike the human worker, the cow body is being depleted completely of her life. The human workers body is slowly wasting and dying away. And when the time comes for the worker to get medical help, the worker too, at that point, becomes disposable because of the inability to access healthcare. Without any medical assistance and without any legal rights, the worker becomes the farmed animal, who is slowly worked (bled) to death.

“Killing” work thus becomes literal for both the working body in the slaughterhouse and the non-human animal body. For example, slaughterhouse workers from Minnesota in 2004 started developing bodily distresses after having worked in the production that chops off the heads of pigs (Slavishak). Workers were inhaling pieces of the pig’s brain as they chopped off the head, which was causing “progressive inflammatory neuropathy,” which ultimately, became a lifetime illness. But as Ed Slavishak said, “The laboring body is the place at which the abstract realm of productivity, markets, and quotas meets the tangible realm of blistered hands, tired backs, and aching feet” (Slavishak, 147). I would also say that the “abstract realm of productivity” meets a tangible reality when a dairy cow is separated from her calf, and also when the slaughtered throat of a farmed animal leads to the death of that being.

While it might be difficult for some to see the human animal and the non-human animal as laboring bodies in a capitalist society, it’s important to question why that might be. What is really at the core of the human that makes him/her different than the “animal?” This question is not intended to say that humans and “animals” are the same, because we know that even humans differ in a variety of ways. Difference then is not the problem. Difference becomes a problem when it is used as marker or as an identifier of denying certain respects to life. In a capitalist society, those that are different become part

of a marginal group that is subjected to the worst life violations. Because survival means becoming a consumer, those marginalized groups have to find ways to navigate in a cyclical system that perpetuates their subjugated state as they themselves also become implicated in the oppression of other human and non-human beings. However, we must not forget capitalism was made to function this way, where laboring bodies produce but also consume material and living flesh. One can even argue that capitalism necessitates humans to consume other beings, because capitalism needs functioning (laborable) bodies that through consuming large portions of meat become sick as a result of diseases and cancer-causing agents in meat. Thus, ultimately making those body's disposable bodies, a status similar to that of non-human animals. Because farm animals are considered property and not actual lives, their bodies are produced to feed the working population that makes capitalism flourish and keeps certain marginalized humans in a vulnerable subjugated state.

However, this is not to say that all forms of animal consumption makes for human sickness or that all marginalized humans are disconnected from non-human animals. In fact, indigenous peoples like the Tecuexe Indians, cousins of the Aztecs, mostly consumed vegetables and fruits given by the land³⁵. Sometimes, not often, they ate wild turkeys and fish. Their main food source came from the maíz that the milpas yielded- a practice that is still alive in some parts of Jalisco. Frijoles and calabazas were also a major source of food (Garcia, "Tecuexe: Nuestra Herencia"). Their spiritual practices spoke to their connection with the earth and the animals that inhabited it. The Tecuexe's acknowledged the differences of the earth and nurtured their relationships with animals, the skies, the water, and the air. Unlike, current food systems in Mexico, the Tecuexe's food consumption did not consist of mostly meat. Even in certain poor areas in Mexico—like where my family is from, a rural part of Zapotlanejo, Mexico—meat is not at the center of every meal. Similarly, indigenous histories show that meat was not seen as

³⁵ I am not seeking to romanticize the Tecuexe's eating habits. However, I am interesting in looking at their specific relationships to animals and how this could have been changed as a result of colonization.

integral to the Native culture because the belief was that in order to survive people needed to have sustainable food sources that respected and lived in harmony with other worldings (Esquivel, C.R. and Calvo, L., 2). Similarly, as Leonard Peltier, a Native American activist, had said, “Let us love not only our sameness, but our unsameness. In our differences is our strength. Let us be not for ourselves alone, but also for that other who is our deepest self” (P.Garcia, personal communication, November 26, 2015). The deepest self, being that non-human animal, whom like a marginalized human becomes a capitalistic commodity.

As I move into the last part of this paper, I am consciously carving out space where I can begin molding new knowledge that include the non-human animal in the *lugar* of those that are marginalized—the “other,” the colored, the queer, the woman, the Mexican, and the “animal.” I am consciously working on the margins that too have laws and bibles that indoctrinate human exceptionalism. I vouch for creating new discourses that bring colonized people back to their roots to reconcile animal-human relationships³⁶. Because a laboring body in a capitalist society does not differentiate between human and animal for in the end they are both machines in the face of capitalism. This is not about choosing animal over human, just like it was not about choosing between black women and black men, white women and third world women, farm workers or union workers. This is not about choosing animal life over my colored brown skin or my female identified body, just like it’s not about choosing between my queer identity and my undocumented status. This is about bringing to light the lived realities of oppressed bodies. And, yes in this framework I include animals. I include animals because I cannot talk about the exploitation and oppression of the Mexican community without talking about the state of animals in slaughterhouses. They are both interconnected. Farmed workers,

³⁶ By roots, I am not exactly talking about actual indigeneity because making such claims would essential rather interrogate the ways in which assertions to native blood do not account for identities within dominant spaces, that exist out of survival, while also acting as a tactic of resistance. The space I am talking about recognizes hybrid identities as evolving and constantly changing out of necessity.

slaughterhouse workers and the animals they kill, as well as the dairy cows, work to produce the foods that keep the workable labor force.

Unlike humans, farmed animals cannot negotiate their embodied status as food. Like in Ofelia's story, even though she is undocumented, she is still able to make work decisions that aid her as she navigates American society. This is not to say that some animals cannot negotiate their relationships with humans and other living beings because they can and they do in order to survive, as well as for personal gain, despite their status (Alaimo, 10). For example, street cats and dogs make decisions on who they trust to give them food and often times they make the choice of moving on to the next human. They do what they need to do to survive. Similarly, domesticated animals also know how to train their human to react in specific ways that will give them what they want—I even say they can be manipulative in a way. Yet, slaughterhouse domesticated animals cannot negotiate their status within a system of production. Similarly, other undocumented workers in the fields or slaughterhouses are also limited to how much they are able to negotiate different parts of themselves. I suggest then that we begin to pay closer attention to those groups that live on the margins of the margins; meaning we should continue to move uncomfortably in and out of the margins into questions that decenter rigid identifications of the “human.” For Donna J. Haraway in *When Species Meet*, says that we cannot expect to have a freedom in the name of condoning the subjugation of another, the ultimate considered “Othered,” the animal (Haraway, 10).

This is what I could not explain to my dad as I became conscious of human and non-human animal as laboring bodies. It was hard to explain to him that it made me angry to see that he had to work over 40 hours a week and that he still had a hard time putting food on the table. It was even harder to articulate how non-human animals too were part of an unjust system of production. For a Mexican household, I also believed he would have a hard time understanding animal care ethics when he himself

came from a machismo culture that controls their women³⁷. However, despite all of this, he was not wrong about Mexico having smaller farms that produced more “humane” meat. But what he did not mention at the time, that I later came to find out, was that my family in Jalisco was mostly vegetarian because they could not afford to buy meat. Their diet mostly consists of frijoles con tortillas. My whole family in Mexico is very poor which is the main reason my dad migrated to California and went straight into the garment industry. But what my dad also failed to mention is that we are descendants of the Tecuexe people and that before being colonized their diets consisted mostly of what the earth was able to yield. After knowing this information I went ahead and sought native recipes that I could transform to fit my conscious eating identity. As Anzaldua beautifully states, “ And yes, the “alien” element has become familiar- never comfortable, not with society’s clamor to uphold the old, to rejoin the flock, to go with the herd.” To add to Anzaldua’s point, the embodiment of “other” calls for acknowledgement and accountability to recognize that “other” too as the non-human animal, because an “alien” state can be so real and raw, that recognizing non-human animals as laboring bodies can only appear both familiar and foreign at the same time. Additionally, Alicia Garza in her piece #BlackLivesMatter beautifully states that its about recognizing how oppressions are interconnected and thus we should not allow different oppressions to be “watered down.”

This new consciousness that I am calling for arose out of my own experience of feeling like an outsider in the animal rights movement. Early on in my involvement in the movement I began to notice that there was something about my experience as a Mexican-Salvadorian Latina that did not allow me to completely believe and adhere to frameworks of animal liberation. It all began when I realized that I was probably the only Latina and person of color in a room full of white activists. In the beginning, this was

³⁷ This is not to say that all Mexican households are machista or that machismo is something that is just part of our culture. Arguably, I would say machismo occurred out of the need to reclaim something that was taken away during colonization. In addition, I would like to mark the ways in which colonization functioned as a tool to produce heteronormative relationships and thus produced different norms in sexuality and gender.

not something I questioned. However, it got to the point where my vegan ethics were being used to judge the life-style of my community. People around me would make comments like, “Well, it's not that expensive to eat healthy... You can survive off of beans and tortillas... The bottom line is that if people want to change they will do it... and apparently these communities are not ready to change...” These comments were hard to hear because I knew that it is not that easy for communities of color to change. Not to mention that it was usually these low-income communities of color that were often left out of our conversations of activism and outreach. Why? Well because it was too difficult to educate people in their own language, especially when white wealthy English speaking individuals led the movement. And while I speak Spanish, it does not necessarily mean that I can translate documents, which was something I was asked to do plenty of times. And, I did do it for the first couple months until I really began to ask myself what was I really doing. Well, I knew that I believed that non-human animals deserve more recognition as sentient beings that deserve to be happy and not be forced into a lifetime of pain and labor. However, at the same time I knew that the Latinx community that I came from did not have the resources or the time to learn about someone else's oppression when they themselves were struggling to survive.

Not to mention, that the people who were organizing for animal rights were also huge proponents of consumerism because of class privilege. This was another reason I could not fully follow in the steps of the animal rights movement because I am not white and I am not wealthy. However, I am Latina, bilingual, Mexican, Salvadorian, low-income, undocumented, and queer. And these parts of my identity were always in face when I went to protests, dinners, or organizing meetings. Even after, when I left the movement to finish my undergrad education at Mount Holyoke College, I was still faced with questions

that related to access and productions of knowledge in Critical Animal Studies as a field that did not really engage with questions of the animal in relation to disenfranchised bodies³⁸.

Thus, it was because I was not able to fully identify with these experiences and scholarly literature that I was pushed into a different sphere—a sphere that sought to complicate dominant frameworks while working within its animal ethics. José Esteban Muñoz’s theory of disidentification works to define these moments as fluctuating between identifying and counter-identifying. As Muñoz highlights, and I concur with, disidentification theory is:

...About recycling and rethinking encoded meaning. The process of disidentification scrambles and reconstructs the encoded message of a culture text in a fashion that both exposes the encoded message’s universalizing and exclusionary machinations and recircuits its workings to account for, include, and empower minority identities and identifications. Thus, disidentification is a step further than cracking open the code for the majority; it proceeds to use this as raw material for representing a disempowered politics or positionality that has been rendered unthinkable by the dominant culture. (Muñoz, 31)

The way that I have applied this to my work is thinking through the ways in which food ethics has worked to actually exclude low-income people of color. This is key, for decoding what liberation might represent in the animal rights movement, as seeming to only focus on the liberation of non-human animals and no one else. Because how can we talk about “liberation” while also being oppressive to other humans? How can we talk about food ethics in a movement that has access to different kinds of expensive foods? In the animal rights movement it is not fair to say that “everyone” has access to certain healthy foods that are needed for a vegan diet. The universalizing aspect of vegan ethics is only accessible to a certain type of person according to the animal rights movement and their organizing tactics. However, while I recognize that the popularized vegan lifestyle might be unattainable for some, I

³⁸ Early on in my research most of the works that I was reading seemed to mostly challenge the woman-animal binary. This is another reason I was triggered to engage more in conversations of race in relation to the animal.

still think that there are aspects of having a more compassionate diet that we, as a Latinx community, cannot shy away from. Thus, in my work, through disidentifying within the vegan movement, I can rework and rethink new and creative ways of including the Latinx community in conversations that question the state of the non-human animals and our interlocking and inter-informing relationships.

This disidentification that I call for also seeks to create space for new ways of eating in the Latinx community through veganizing traditional Mexican recipes. As Muñoz states, disidentification “...participates and imagines a reconstructed narrative of identity formation that locates the enacting of self at precisely the point where the discourses of essentialism and constructivism short-circuit” (Muñoz, 6). Thus, instead of completely shutting out vegan frameworks or traditional meat eating in Mexican households, I seek to work in-between these two spheres, in hopes of bridging together these two apparently opposing views. At the same time, in remaking and reworking recipes I can make visible the identities that have been erased in the animal/vegan rights movement.

As a result of coming into this consciousness I choose to move away from comfortable narratives of Mexican food recipes. I will write about the process of transforming a native Mexican dish on the margins of my Mexican vegan identity- an identity that informs me that I am neither from here nor from there. Neither Mexico nor United States feels like home, because I was not raised in Mexico and have always felt like a foreigner in the United States. My vegan identity also fits this ambiguous space because my Latina identity does not align with popular vegan narratives. Similarly, my colonized roots do not allow space to reclaim native ways of eating that are earth based. This is also interesting, because as I claim to decolonize my food by transforming a native recipe, I am not actually using foods “native” to that land, because I am not on that land. Similarly, the recipe I will transform is one that has been passed down through cooking in the kitchen with my elders, which possibly has already been changed many times. Not to mention that the chilaquiles recipe that I have does not have any meat, thus making

it already mostly vegetarian. In this case, what initially did not make the recipe vegetarian is that it included *consome de pollo*, which is believed the French brought over during conquest. This specific dish speaks to how meat does not need to be an integral part of every Mexican dish. The tortillas in the *chilaquiles* highlight the use of maize and the *milpas* that produced it. Even during colonization, indigenous people relied on maize as a main source of food because it was cheap, easy to grow, reliable, and required little to no capital investment (Piltcher, 14). As for the *tomatillos* in the recipe, it is believed that the Aztec's first grew them in 800 B.C.E. Growing up every meal consisted of a side of salsa to give the food that sason. Salsa, like crema, was and continues to be part of almost every meal.

With Mexican food, as this recipe points out, crema and cheese are usually part of every meal, from *crema con huevos* for breakfast to *frijoles con crema* for dinner. Crema, as I remember, gives your meal that extra bitter creamy taste you desire or it even tastes good just with a single tortilla. Even though crema might be thought of as native to Mexican culture, it is actually not. When the Spaniards colonized the “new world” they introduced the people to dairy products derived from cows and other domesticated animals from Spain (Staller and Carrasco, 42). Thus, it is interesting to hear that vegan practices are American when in fact plant-based diets are native to our indigenous roots pre-colonization. Claudia Serrato, a graduate student at the University of Washington, states that, ‘It says you need to have milk, you need to have cheese – all these processed foods. It’s all part of a political project. Removing these things allows for a remembering or a return of an Indigenous food way,’ (Layne, "Decolonizing Our Diets"). By becoming vegan, Serrato is able to reclaim her indigenous ways of eating while also showing her resistance to colonial food practices. As Serrato says, ‘Decolonization is a colonial way of understanding that resiliency.’ As a result of being conscious of this history I will transform the (dairy) crema, commonly used, into a vegan crema that will actively not use any dairy. Part of veganizing these recipes is to decolonize food in an attempt to reclaim my indigenous roots as a

Tecuexe descendent, while also moving away from using any animal product that perpetuates that same colonial notion I am trying to deconstruct. Just as important, is the intention of recognizing that in veganizing this recipe I am not trying to essentialize or generalize indigenous food consumption. On the other hand, the intent is to challenge capitalistic food consumptions that exclude and erase minority experiences. I do not call for a romanticizing of native eating, for that is what Columbus did. I call for a revision of the essentialized native and the universalized vegan consumer. I call for a new “viewing, reading, and locating (of) “self” within representational systems and disparate life-worlds that aim to displace or occlude a minority subject” (Muñoz, 26).

Conclusion

The human-animal relationship is one that often gets dismissed because as colonial subjects we try hard to disassociate ourselves as and from animals to reclaim our negated “humanity.” However, what we fail to see is that we have incorporated and been made complicit to the same values of dominance and control which we have been colonized by. It should alarm us when we fight against the marginalizing of different identities by fighting for inclusiveness, because we still choose to accept the ultimate difference in non-human animals, which might actually be the key to draw us back to our “humanity.” We must not let our embodied differences be the determinate by which we allow exploitation and abuse. Rather, we should acknowledge and challenge our instilled notions of superiority and dominance by moving away from hierarchies that reinforce the construction of power. Similarly, instead of using the difference of non-human animal as a marker by which we define human, we should use the construction of the “animal” as a lens by which we understand our positions as “Othered” subjects in a capitalistic society. We can gain a better understanding of how power works if we learn to accept and value difference. Thus, we have much more to lose if we allow our differences to continue to separate us. In the end, “Othered” bodies in a capitalist society are laborable bodies, disposable bodies,

and “giving” bodies, subjected to pain and death. We do not need verbal language to understand the love and pain in non-human representing bodies. Besides, the idea of language imposition is one that colonized bodies, like Mexican subjects, know very well and are all too familiar with. This is not to say a history of white supremacy and imperialism does not penetrate these pages. Actually this is more to say that we have interlocking, inter-informing, and inter-sustaining oppressions that are embodied through laboring bodies and that need our attention.



Mi Papí y yo, despues de haber comido unos elotes rostisados.

(Mi Papi, 2015)



15 Tortillas de Maiz (corn tortillas)

1 libra Tomatillos

1 cucharilla de Consome de Verduras

1/4 de una Cebolla Blanca (onion)

1 Dientes de Ajo (1 garlic cloves)

Sal (salt)

1 taza de Aceite de Vegetal (1 cup of Vegetable oil)

1. Corta las tortillas en pedacitos chiquitos. Dora los pedacitos de tortillas en el aceite. Ponlos al lado.
2. Pela los tomatillos and cose los con poquita agua. Cuando esten blanditos, ponlos en la licuadora con 1 taza del agua en la que se cocieron.
3. Agrega 1 diente de ajo y la cebolla con el consome de vegetal. Muele todo junto.
4. En una olla pon las tortillas doradas y despues agrega los ingredientes de la licuadora.
5. Deja cocer por 15 minutos.
6. Al fin, sirve los chilaqueles con crema.

1. Cut the tortillas into small pieces. Toast the tortilla pieces in oil to make chips. Once finished, put them aside.
2. Peel the tomatillos and boil them in water. When they are tender, put them in a blender with 1 cup of water from the pot they were boiled in.

3. Add 1 clove of garlic and the onion with the vegetable broth. Grind all together.
4. In a saucepan put in the golden tortillas and then add the ingredients from the blender.
5. Let it cook for 15 minutes.
6. Finally serve the chilaquiles with sour cream and enjoy!

Crema

1 taza de Anacardos (1 cup of cashews)

$\frac{3}{4}$ de una taza de Agua

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cucharilla de vinagre de sidra de manzana (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of apple cider vinegar)

2 cucharillas de limón

Sal, al tanto

1. Remojar los Anacardos durante la noche o por lo menos 2 horas antes de usar. Cuanto más tiempo se remojo los anacardos, mas cremoso sera la crema! Cuando esté listo/a para hacer su crema enjuague los anacardos y pongalos al un lado.
2. Ponga todos los ingredientes en una licuadora y mezcla! Añadir sal a medida que avanza y tanto como le gustaría. Mezcla hasta que quede suave.
3. Coloque la crema en un recipiente pequeño y diviértete!

1. Soak the cashews over night or for at least 2 hours. The longer you soak the cashews the creamer your cream will be! When you are ready to make your cream rinse the cashews and set them aside.
2. Put all of your ingredients in a blender, and blend! Add salt as you go and as much as you'd like. Blend until smooth.

3. Place in a small container and enjoy!

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