



Slow violence against animals: Unseen spectacles in racing and at zoos

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ABSTRACT

There is little consensus on what constitutes violence towards nonhuman animals *and* a perceptual lacuna between understandings of violence and violent effects. This paper aims to address both issues, first by using Nixon's concept of slow violence to extend conceptions of violence towards nonhumans beyond a focus on physical violence, and second, by foregrounding the subjectivities affected by violence. Focusing on zoos and racing events (horses and greyhounds) – spaces where violence towards animals is largely silent or 'smoothed' – practices that support and shape the visual consumption of spectacularised animals are examined through interviews with 59 visitors to these sites. Analysis reveals how the subjectivities of the animals in question are respectively aggregated and negated, instrumentalised, anthropocentrically narrated, and re-captured at potential points of escape from these 'hypertopic' regimes. As a discursive corrective to this desubjectification, and offering a means of imaginative resistance, the final part of the paper offers three ficto-critical biographical constructions of the lives of a greyhound, a thoroughbred horse used in racing, and a mandrill. These constructions centre the subjective, lifetime experience of these animals, encompassing not only moments of human interaction but also their effects. In conclusion, the paper argues that unsettling speciesism and anthropocentrism requires more than critiques of fast violence. Expanding and clarifying understandings of violence against other animals is proposed as one means of launching a more serious challenge to the oppression of all animals, including those used in ways conceived as largely benign or even benevolent.

Are these horses' deaths worth the enjoyment I get out of it...? It's a difficult one, and it's something I've wrestled with on many an occasion. ...There isn't a right or wrong answer, I don't think. (Participant 35M).

1. Introduction

There is currently little consensus on what constitutes violence towards animals (Bard et al., 2010; Broad, 2020; Marriott and Cassaday, 2022) though most Animal studies scholars and advocates would agree that one of its most consistent features is the mechanisms of concealment used to downplay or negate the various ways violence marks animal/human relations. In this article, I focus on sites where animals are consumed as visual spectacles, at zoos, and in greyhound and horse racing, and show how this consumption is premised on a perceptual lacuna between understandings of violence and violent effects. An examination of how nonhuman animals, and the practices they are part of, are 'made sense of' at these sites is set alongside what is known about these animals' lives and how such practices affect them.

Together with similarly organised spaces that facilitate other ways of consuming animals—literally (as food, clothing, medicines), scientifically (as research/test subjects), and emotionally (for sport or companionship)—zoos and racing events are conceived as accelerators or "mills of brutality" (White and Springer, 2018: 163) that intensify

violent effects on nonhuman animals, generate collective legitimation for violations of their subjectivities, and disperse this legitimacy more widely to shape, sustain, and reinvigorate the anthropocentric hegemony of animal exploitation.

Drawing on the medical notion of hypertrophia as an "excessive growth or accumulation,"¹ these sites are conceived as 'hypertopia.' Literally places of excess, hypertopia are where the majority, if not all, practices are organized around and towards the exploitation of animals, locally magnifying and solidifying the hegemonic order so that it takes on an exaggerated form. They provide the converse to Foucault's (1967) heterotopia, defined as counter-sites that at once represent, contest, and invert the societies of which they are part.

Exemplaries of these 'mills of brutality,' also characterized as 'geographies of hell' (White and Springer, 2018), 'animal gulags' (Plumwood, 2002), animal deathscapes (Mazhary, 2021), and 'ungodly' constellations of violence (Doel, 2017), are primarily slaughterhouses, factory farms, and vivisection laboratories. These are sites where animals are subject to especially violent practices and so justifiably draw considerable attention from media, advocacy groups, and scholars (Arcari, P., 2023; Author, 2022a). However, a focus on physical violence can reinforce the perception that this is the only kind of violence occurring in animal-based industries that is unnecessary/unacceptable, and that such violence can be mitigated, leaving the context of animal

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¹ See: <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/hypertrophia>.

use unchallenged. Acts of violence within these places are thus routinely framed as exceptional within otherwise legitimate relations of use (Hribal, 2010). This focus also gives rise to a sense that, from the animals' perspective, physical violence is the only or most concerning kind of violence. Generating an understanding of the lives of commodified animals as characterized by slow, protracted violence as much as exceptional moments of 'fast' violence could offer a more radical challenge to their wider contexts of use. Where fast violence is spectacular and active, slow violence, "occurs gradually and out of sight,"² a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" Nixon (2011: 2).

Zoos, horse racing, and greyhound racing events are sites where animals are not typically seen as being subjected to violence. Their violences are largely silent or 'smoothed' (Wadiwel, 2015), an effect of practices based on relations with animals understood as positive, benign, or, at minimum, not intentionally harmful. These sites are therefore potentially more insidious than factory farms or research facilities for their persistent normalizations and ambivalent associations, if not enthusiastic support. Equally as brutal, they are the quiet(er) handmaidens of anthroparchic orders, operating behind a "veneer of peacability" (Wadiwel, 2015: 13).

This paper therefore examines the lives of animals in these industries through the lens of slow violence as a means of addressing a prevalent focus on physical harms *and* on interactions between humans and animals, overlooking the majority of time animals spend apart from humans enduring violent effects.

The first section of the paper describes the emergence and application of slow violence and its effects on subjectivities. Drawing on empirical data generated from interviews with visitors to zoos, horse races, and greyhound racing events, I illustrate how animal subjectivities are violated at these sites. I then switch to a ficto-critical mode, and build in biographical stories of a horse, greyhound, and mandrill respectively, aiming to articulate something of their subjective experience of violation. The intent is to foreground lives ruled by slow violence so they can be seen with 'un-encoded' eyes (Foucault, 1989: xxii). As Regan (2010: 37) asserts, animals have a biography and not merely a biology.

2. Violence and slow violence

Previously, I have shown how animals are constituted as food through a multisensory Foucauldian regime of power/knowledge/pleasure (Arcari, 2019a), and argued that the agency of animals drawn into social practices is a priori ontologically limited under the "persistent and nonreversible" (Palmer, 2001: 344) terms of their relationships with humans (Arcari 2019b). Here, I locate animals front and centre and follow up the question of their ontological limitation by examining less what social practices accomplish in terms of animals' materialization (and how), and rather what this materialization, seen as a vehicle for further violent effects, means for them—how it is experienced and how it affects their lives. Conceiving violence as an outcome of social practices widens the scope of this enquiry to include violent effects with diffuse origins and unspecified temporalities—effects that can be understood in terms of slow violence (Nixon, 2011; Christian and Dowler, 2019).

Slow violence is Nixon's (2011) response to the unseen and disregarded effects of rich-nation environmentalism on places and peoples considered disposable—the "long dyings" of discounted casualties, human and ecological, that result from war, climate change, deforestation, and other environmental harms (ibid: 2). The concept recognises that the devastations inflicted by such calamities are not just immediate,

explosive, and spectacular, but also slow and enduring, dispensed gradually over time so they become internalised and embodied. Rethinking the temporal dispersion of violence, Nixon argues, necessarily alters how a range of social ills are also understood, including domestic abuse, posttraumatic stress, and displacement—ills that particularly affect non- as well as othered humans. Slow violence resonates with Galtung's 'structural violence', defined as violence where it is difficult to identify a person who directly causes the harm (1969: 171). For Nixon, slow violence, which emphasises "time, movement, and change" (2011: 11), can include structural violence, while Davies contends they are "irrevocably linked" (2022: 413).

To date, geographical scholarship on slow violence has focused on social and health impacts of "toxic geographies" (Davies, 2018), including 'resource' extraction, pollution, and waste incineration (Armiero and Fava, 2016; Cao, 2020; Daggett, 2018; Davies, 2018, 2022; Gamu and Dauvergne, 2018), and on gendered and racialised dimensions of slow violence (Pain and Cahill, 2021) seen in the impacts of Covid-19 (Montford and Wotherspoon, 2021), housing dispossession (Pain, 2018), displacement (Gamu and Dauvergne, 2018; Mayblin et al., 2020; Schindel, 2022), deportation (Horsti and Pirkkalainen, 2021), exclusion (Kern, 2015), and race crime (Ward, 2015).

Thus far, conceptions of the victims of slow violence remain resolutely anthropocentric, including in Nixon's volume. Even 'environmental violence' (often used to illustrate slow violence) only rarely refers to violence "against non-human nature" (Barca, 2014: 537). Moreover, nature is homogenised and aggregated and, as in other studies, the focus is how this violence affects humans (Horowitz, 2009; Lee, 2016; Narchi, 2015; Zimmerer, 2017). Exceptions include Åsberg and Radomska's (2021) exploration of environmental violence in the Baltic and North Sea regions, and Twine's forthcoming volume *The Climate Crisis and Other Animals*, in which he emphasises how the delayed effects of climate breakdown "cut across species differences" (2023: n.p).

As with its human applications, I suggest slow violence is a useful heuristic for drawing attention to how violence is experienced and not just what it comprises (Staudigl, 2013). For the violence of violence lies less in particular actions or practices than what these accomplish over different timescales. The concept of slow violence has not so far been applied to nonhuman animals but is a distinct dimension of a range of practices viewed as largely unproblematic including those associated with conservation (Probyn-Rapsey and Lennox, 2020), entertainment (Hribal, 2010), companionship (Cudworth, 2011), and education (Young and Bone, 2018).

This concern for slow violence resonates with Springer's (2016: 104) description of violence as a "disavowal of freedom" but takes this further to consider the subjective and ontological implications of this disavowal. It is also an inherently political move intended to make visible passive, routine, banal, and intimate forms of violence against animals that are typically ignored in favour of violence that is 'hot', active and more easily generates public concern (Christian and Dowler, 2019). Christian and Dowler argue these binaries—slow/fast, banal/hot, private/public, passive/active, intimate/global—reinforce gendered and raced [and speciesist] conceptions of space, scale, and time, and should instead be seen as inescapably relational. Given the prioritisation of fast violence, it is this relationality that (for now) "lends urgency and visibility to the slow" (Christian and Dowler, 2019: 1072).

Of course, violence is only 'slow' and 'out of sight' from the perspective of those remote from its effects. As Davies highlights, "'Out of sight' to whom?" (2022). This raises the question of who is given authorisation over what counts as violence. Foucault describes violence as a relationship that acts on a body, that forces, bends, breaks on the wheel, destroys, or closes the door on all possibilities (1982: 789). The World Health Organisation's widely used definition describes it as:

"the *intentional* use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community,

² Contra Nixon, much of this violence is actually very visible though epistemically 'out of sight', ie. not seen as violence.

that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (Krug et al., 2002: 5, emphasis added).

Conceiving violence not as an intentional act or end in itself but rather as an effect of social practices opens up understandings of violence beyond externally imposed definitions of what it is (or is not) to allow for the ‘other’ to have a say in what is experienced as violence. As Nixon argues, “contests over what counts as violence are intimately entangled with conflicts over who bears the social authority of witness” (2011: 16).

Everyday practices in which individuals participate, for example ‘going to’ the horse races, may not be consciously questioned, least of all noted as violent. They are part of the routine and normalized functioning of a larger constellation that is the horse racing industry (Schatzki, 2010, 2011). However, as with all animal-based industries, horse racing renders animals, in this case equines, as material elements in its constitutive practices (Arcari, 2019a; Shove et al., 2012). While these practices, from going to the races to breeding and training, have varied teleoaffectivities—prescribed and/or acceptable “affective engagements” by which they ‘make sense’ (Welch, 2017: 61)—they are all underpinned by a fundamental epistemic violence that conceals their violent effects on these animals. It is these effects this paper endeavours to illuminate.

For example, UK Codes of Practice for greyhound racing stipulate that greyhounds should have “adequate daily opportunities to exercise away from their kennel units” (GBGB, 2019). What is ‘adequate’ is undefined, meaning it is legal for dogs to be kennelled close to 24 h a day, though typically around 23 h. Horses used in racing often experience multiple changes in ownership, trainer, location, and jockey during their short careers. Dean Stansall, horse-racing consultant with the UK advocacy organisation Animal Aid observes, “it’s down to luck as to the hands they fall into.”³ Finally, animals in zoos live in manufactured environments a fraction of the size of their wild habitats, severed from their ecological communities and largely devoid of physical or sensory encounters with other nonhuman life.

These are just some of the conditions these appropriated nonhuman lives are subjected to, contributing to the “gradual deaths, destructions, and layered deposits of uneven social brutalities” (Davies, 2022: 410) endured by billions of animals worldwide, and emphasising the conceptual and temporal provocations offered by slow violence that Davies suggests geography has overlooked.

3. Violent effects

A concern with “the submission of subjectivity” (Foucault, 1982: 782) unites a long genealogy of critical scholarship on power (Springer, 2016; Storey, 2020) and the mid 90s onwards saw a concerted focus on its spatial dimensions. Geographies of resistance (Pile and Keith, 1997), domination (Sharp et al., 2000), difference (Jackson, 2002), fear (Shirlow and Pain, 2003), responsibility (Massey, 2004), violence (Gregory and Pred, 2007), and anarchism (Ferretti, 2017), are testament to heightening concerns for the effects of hegemonic social orders and struggles to preserve marginalized identities and freedoms. These extend to geographies of anthropocentrism and speciesism and struggles for nonhuman freedoms (Gillespie and Collard, 2015; Hodge et al., 2022; Nibert, 2013, 2017).

Essentially, geographies of power are responses to the violation of subjectivities. Wieviorka asserts “violence can, depending on the situation, destroy or negate subjectivity” (2003: 49). However, I contend violence, as an outcome of social practices, is always predicated on and causes the violation of subjectivity. Conceiving violence (a force) also as violation (its effect) focuses attention on how it affects and is

experienced by the other—the object of violence. Violation, according to Staudigl, is “a refusal to respond to the appeal of the other” (2013: 50). Dictionary definitions include “to treat (something sacred) with irreverence or disrespect”, to interfere thoughtlessly, or take away something.⁴ This underlines the relational nature of violence, the result of “the subject’s relation with those it encounters...who can make this world appear to it, disappear, or, finally, disappear, and accordingly shape its self-understanding, self-conception, and agency” (Staudigl, 2013: 44).

In the case of animals, the originary desubjectifying violence is the designation ‘animal,’ which triggers a further cascade of aggregations and divisions wherein subjectivities are measured and marked into cases, records, and numbers (Foucault, 1977: 192). Most animals imbricated in the animal-industrial complex (A-IC) are also property—an additional legal “desubjectification of a living entity” (Wadiwel, 2015: 156) that sanctions and conceals ensuing violences. Capitalism, moreover, relies on the objectification of both its labour and animate resources to justify their subjugation to production imperatives. It therefore depends on the ‘gradual death’ of slow violence. Indeed, Doel describes capitalism as “a slaughter industry” for humans and nonhumans alike (2017: 82).

Animals are thus subjected to, and subjugated by, an intimately interconnected triad of epistemic violence (animal/property/resource) that offers up their subjectivities as always and already violable (Fig. 1). But to mainly refer to animals collectively as objectified, instrumentalised, and commodified within social practices misses the nuances of violation and what these mechanisms do to individuals.

Subjectivity is understood as an experiential and elusive quality. Drawing on von Uexküll (1957) and MacCormack (2020), it encompasses the capacity of a living entity to sense the world and their place in it, and to express itself in that world in their own way. Anything that diminishes or destroys that capacity, effectively “repudiating the materialization of the other” (MacCormack, 2020: 13), is a violation. Gruen (2015: 283-5) describes animals living useless lives, deprived of community and unable to express natural urges or make autonomous choices, even as part of relations that may be “thoughtful and compassionate.” Donaldson and Kymlicka cite Goffman’s “curtailments of the self” (2015: 56). In Deleuzian terms, the disavowal of subjectivity prevents a being’s own becoming.

These curtailments and repudiations of self-becoming can be conceived as ontological violence, defined by Weisberg as the distortion of “the phenomenological basis of [an animal’s] existence, especially

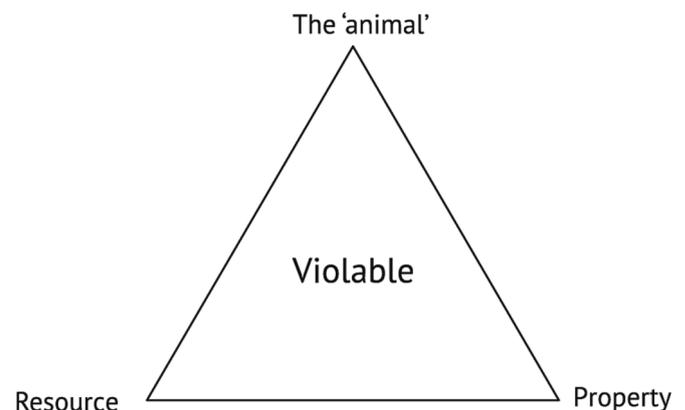


Fig. 1. Triad of Violability.

⁴ See Oxford Languages, Dictionary.com: <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/violate>.

³ Personal communication.

their perceptual experience and expression of subjective time and space” (2015: 41). Ontological violence extends beyond the individual animal, disrupting phylogenetic (long-term, generational) as well as ontogenetic (life-time) knowledge (Pribac, 2021). The idea of severed and compromised lives resonates at an individual level with Marx’s notion of alienation from species-being, described by Cudd as psychic harm (2006: 13–4), and at a species level with Rose’s concept of ‘double death’ as the destruction of “entire generations of living things and connectivities” (2006: 75) and the “extinguishing of ethical time” (2012: 128).

To clarify, subjectivity is not the same as subjectification, which is a human construction of another’s subjectivity that is ‘granted’ to them and can easily coexist with objectification (Arcari, 2019b; Marchesini, 2016; Morgan and Cole, 2011).

Violence might thus be understood as more than damage to x-number of physical bodies and more fundamentally about the negation of subjectivity. This violation encompasses a compendium of slow violences that are the embodied effects of innumerable everyday practices and their constellations, including but not limited to:

- Hours, days, months, years, decades, and entire lifetimes (of any duration) spent in captivity and confinement, in environments that may remain largely or entirely unchanged.
- Permanent, repeated, and prolonged periods of isolation, separation from family and community, and severing of bonds, with associated experiences of loss and grief (Pribac, 2021).
- Restriction and/or removal of choice, even in relations conceived as benign—“the quiet stranglehold of a full-time alertness to benevolent rule; the virtually unspeakable loss of control, the abnegation, over what is possible” (Gordon, 1997: 206–7).
- Loss of “affective intensities” as a result of “fissured ecologies,” changes in biochemical landscapes, and dulling of multi- and much more-than-human sensory spectra (Lorimer, Hodgetts and Barua, 2017: 30–1).
- The devices, tools, and technologies used to confine, separate, control, and circumscribe lives, repeatedly confirming animals’ status as never (wholly) free in their worlds and as property in ours.
- The physical and psychological wear and tear of the constant struggle to survive within prescribed limits, day after day, year after year (Gordon, 1997: 206).
- The loss or, more accurately, *theft* of life-time, measured in months, years, or decades, as lives are cut short through direct acts of human intervention or the result of physical, biological, and psychological stresses and strains—or both.

The challenge is how to capture empirical evidence of the experience of slow violence. In what follows, I provide two different sources of evidence for slow violence and its effects. The first comes from human visitors to zoos and racing events, and an examination of how associated narratives both acknowledge and disavow the slow violence on display. The second comes from my observations of animals at these sites, investigations into their biographies, and an attempt to reassemble their experience as a means of countering their desubjectification.

4. Methodology

Data were generated as part of a three-year fellowship titled, *The Visual Consumption of Animals: Challenging Persistent Binaries* (2019–2022). This UK-based project explored spectacularized animals at the zoo, horse races, and greyhound races, conceived as routinized and highly visible access points to understand normalised narratives and practices that constitute animals as visual resources and reinforce global systems of nonhuman appropriation and abuse.

Methods comprise: 1. A focus on the material, spatial, and temporal arrangements of these spaces via site visits, interviews, and secondary sources, 2. Tracking individual animals’ movements and engagement

with these arrangements over time,⁵ and 3. Semi-structured interviews with 59 site visitors (visual consumers) (35 female and 24 male) between June 2020 and November 2021 to explore meanings and understandings associated with the animals on display and the practices they are part of.⁶ Questions covered the role of the site/event in visitors’ lives, routines of participation, emotional associations, memorable/noteworthy moments, the animal perspective, and overall reflections on the site/event and the broader industry. All three phases inform this paper. Audio recordings were transcribed and thematically coded using NVivo qualitative software.

Site visits included one visit each to a nearby greyhound stadium and horseracing event before Covid-19 lockdowns were implemented. Regular visits to one local zoo continued with little disruption. Recruitment during site-visits was not possible as these spaces are private property. Participants were recruited through social media and flyers/posters in public spaces. To be eligible, participants had to have visited a UK zoo, greyhound, or horse-racing event within the previous year. Some participants had visited all three sites, others only one. In total, interviews included 34 zoo visitors (23 female and 11 male), 30 horse race-goers (16 female and 14 male), and 14 greyhound race-goers (7 female and 7 male). Participants were located primarily in the north of England but also the Midlands, south England, Scotland, and Wales. Of the total participants, 41 (69%) hold under or post-graduates degrees, well above the UK average of 25% (OECD, 2022). This is likely a result of self-selection bias in online recruitment methods (Facebook groups, Twitter, and university newsletters) and is an important consideration for the representativeness of such methods.

The following analyses hold animals central. As part of this, contrasting with the named animals in the ‘biographies’, participant data are de-identified but pseudonyms are not used. Numbers are assigned and F/M denotes female/male participants. This reversing of anthropocentric narrative norms, whereby human protagonists in human-animal encounters are rendered anonymous and secondary to animals, is borrowed from Hribal (2010).

5. Slow violations

The following four (non-exclusive) sections explore how animals’ subjectivities are respectively aggregated and negated, instrumentalised, anthropocentrically narrated, and re-captured at the point they threaten to upset the mechanisms of distancing effects.

5.1. Aggregation and negation of animals’ subjectivities

Aside from the usual depersonalizing language and speciesist typologies (animals as ‘it’ and ‘them’ and ‘racehorses’), animals at zoos and/or racing events are described in aggregate terms that reduce their wellbeing to the basic needs of their species or breed and belie the widely varying practices they can be individually subjected to. Thoroughbred horses are, en masse, “treated exceptionally well” (14F), “like

⁵ As neither an animal behaviourist nor ethologist, conducting extended animal observations with the idea that I can accurately interpret what I see is untenable. Site visits aimed to determine the material conditions and organisational routines constituting animals’ lives—the “events, practices, assemblages, affective atmospheres, and the backgrounds of everyday life” (Vannini 2014:318), how much these varied, and how animals appeared to react, rather than document and interpret behaviour. Moreover, speaking for animals requires more than watching and interpreting behaviour as this plays into the human-centric prioritisation of sight and human ‘knowing’ which can arguably be seen as more colonising. Fieldwork encounters, as Vannini observes, exceed representation and explanation (2014: 320).

⁶ Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with eight industry stakeholders—four associated with horse racing and four with zoos. No contacts associated with the greyhound industry agreed to be interviewed. Stakeholder interviews informed the animal biographies in Section 7.

kings” (23M), and “royalty” (22F). Animals in zoos are “very comfortable” (11F), many with “vast” amounts of land (6F), and “fantastic enclosures” (42F). As long as certain visual criteria are met, participants appear satisfied these correlate with the ‘animals’ (collectively) wellbeing.

Relatedly, and in common with welfare approaches, the presence of ‘care’ and absence of obviously negative indicators provide assurance that animals are living well or at least adequately. One participant felt satisfied with a zoo visit as, in contrast to zoos he had visited in Europe, he “only saw one animal that seemed a bit stressed” (5M). Others are supportive of zoos as long as the animals (as a collective) appear “well cared for” (50F) and “looked after” (7F). A similarly low baseline of care applies at horse races where, “you never see any injuries or anything particularly wrong, malnutrition or anything” (39M).

Comments show how nonphysical and even physical suffering and harm, short of deliberate abuse, is downplayed within these hypertopic spaces of acceptable use, even if participants are aware of their possibility. ‘Care’ becomes a “mechanism of control” (Giraud and Hollin, 2016: 37)—both physical and discursive—that only extends to a level of ‘well-regulated’ species-level welfare that does not adversely affect these industries while facilitating their customers’ enjoyment.

Notions of a life outside the scope of these arrangements are dismissed with the knowledge that the animals in question, “just get used to everything” (17M; 20F). Captive bred animals in zoos, “won’t really know any different” (7F; 48M; 39M) while thoroughbred horses “are bred for and exist for that purpose” (26F), “it’s in their bloodlines...their gene pools” (25M) and “their breeding” (35M). Greyhounds that exit the racing industry risk becoming “a bit confused...depressed because they’re not doing what they want to do” (33M).

Animals in zoos also serve a higher purpose by playing “a vital role” (49F) in education and conservation—discourses ardently promulgated by the industry despite their questioned veracity (BFF, 2021; Arcari, 2022b; Marino et al., 2010). Seeing these animals is framed as a child’s entitlement, and a measure of social equality (7F), because children “need to see these things” (38F) to “get up close” and have “real-life experiences” (51F). Conservation claims soften perceptions of captivity. One participant used to dislike the idea of animals in zoos “because they were in cages.” But this has changed with her understanding of “good zoos... that are there for conservation” (41F, emphasis added). After all, “how else would you experience that?” (47F).

Regardless of animals’ material conditions, zoos with conservation or educational “intentions” (41F) are less concerning (42F) and “sit more comfortably” (45F) with participants. Despite evident misgivings, these constructed and curated discourses shape understandings of zoo’s captive subjectivities as “martyrs” (10M) to these elevated causes, and as “taking one for the team” (50F).

5.2. Instrumentalisation of Animals’ subjectivities

Participants readily attribute happiness, sadness, boredom, stress, and other emotions to animals. However, hypertopic arrangements prioritise human interests and the industrial telos over those of animals.

Referring to both horse racing and greyhound racing, a participant explains, “you’d think, ‘is that going to run that well if it looks a bit worried or not happy?’” (29M). A horse that is overexcited, “shaking its head around...sweating a lot,” (29M) “nervy, anxious” or looking “a mess,” (17M), or “likely to boil up” (59M) raises questions about their capacity to ‘perform,’ their “ability to gallop and jump well” (26F), not their wellbeing. In contrast, anxiety in greyhounds is favourably correlated with happiness (19M) and a desire to race, while “aggressive” behaviour (32M) is also regarded positively. Such interpretations show how animals’ reactions to their situations are de-personalised, organised around a shared, tacit, instrumental lexicon that backgrounds the individual.

Zoo animals also have emotional and mental states ascribed to them that legitimate their captivity. The mere presence of the animal,

successfully existing, is enough for one participant to conclude, “they enjoy it because they don’t know any different” (49F). The capacity to endure their situations is equated to mental wellbeing because “an animal that’s unhappy won’t thrive” (38F). However, correlating existing and even physical ‘thriving’ with mental happiness, an implicit strategy used by ‘good’ zoos to differentiate and validate their operations, is a gross simplification and negation of subjectivities.

Animals’ physicalities are also instrumentalised, particularly horses in racing. To assess performance potential, one participant determines whether a horse is “well put together” (38F). She also assesses their physique against ground conditions to determine ‘its’ (ie. the physique’s) suitability. Another casts his (already encoded) “critical eye” over the parade ring, looking for “any bits of lameness or odd gaits” (59M). Seeing horses “in the flesh” (26F), checking for “good conformation...good muscle development” (21M), gives participants an edge, allowing them, over time, to recognise when they become “more the finished article” (21M).

Within horse racing’s hypertopic complex, horses’ subjectivities and physical attributes are conflated with the socially constructed ‘race-horse,’ reducing them to ‘fit-for-purpose’ objects who have shaped their own lives. One participant speculates whether “they [would] ever even have got to be professional race horses if it wasn’t something they had an ability and an affinity to want to do?” (37F). In her analysis of horse-racing, Bergmann (2020) examines the ‘fallacy’ of the reductionist, instrumentalised, and opportunistic naturalness discourse mobilised by industry informants. Greyhounds’ “natural instincts to run and gallop” (43F) similarly legitimate and almost excuse their co-option into these excessive networks. It is as if, with their social natures and physical attributes, these animals are complicit in their fates.

Animal physicalities are further instrumentalised through their emotional impacts on humans, which these industries leverage in promotional strategies. Participants describe watching “fantastic physical specimens” as “exciting and exhilarating” (25M). Greyhounds’ aerodynamic elegance and physicality is “thrilling” (32M) and a pleasure to watch (33M). Some claim benefits “from a mental health perspective” (21M) from being close to horses, stating simply “they’re good for me” (57F). Watching zoo animals helps participants relax (42F), instilling feelings of “empowerment...calmness” (51M) and “a sense of tranquility” (49F). Happiness is also correlated to physical proximity, “where they are close enough to touch” (46F) or “you feel that you’re touching” (51F).

Indeed, allusions to haptic or tactile visibility (Marks, 2002: 2; also Parkinson, 2018) feature heavily in accounts of horse racing. Multi-sensorially memorable moments involve being at “that almost touchable distance” (10M), so close “you can feel the heat and see the steam coming off their coats” (24F). Close enough to enjoy the “primal enjoyment, adrenaline rush feeling” of watching “massive horses go thundering past” (18M), to feel “the ground shake” (59M).

Pleasures and benefits associated with these animals and their hypertopic arrangements conceal the ways in which their subjectivities are instrumentalised. However, subjective expressions less open to interpretation require a different approach.

5.3. Anthropocentric narratives

When animals more visibly resist or comply with a given situation, this is read as evidence they want to work for humans and can choose to refuse whenever they wish. This is most evident in horse racing where the understanding that horses would simply stop if they did not want to race/jump is almost universal and indeed endorsed and perpetuated by the British Horseracing Authority (BHA, 2018). Respondents assert, “you can’t push a horse. If that horse has planted its four legs...you’re not going to move it” (17M), and “they can just put the breaks on. If a horse puts the brakes on, it’s not going anywhere it doesn’t want to” (23M).

This discounts the all-encompassing and extended networks of the

hypertopia in which these animals exist where, from the moment of their birth or capture, techniques of slow and fast violence are used to subjugate and wear down any notion that they can act on their own preferences with no consequences (unless they align with human interests). The evidence of these techniques is in the forms and tools of containment, control, training, physical force, displacement, and erasure that characterise their lives. These prove the existence of subjectivities that ‘require,’ and are always subject to, suppression. While often highly visible, these mechanisms are smoothed into the normalised violence of these industries.

Race goers value the parade ring so they can see the ‘kit’ the horses wear. An inexperienced horse with “a lot of equipment on” is “probably a horse that is *being difficult*” (26F, emphasis added). Hoods with padded ears (to reduce noise sensitivity) are used for ‘a reason’ and signal horses that are “like coiled springs” (56F) and “*get themselves* in a state” or “very wound up” (26F, emphasis added). The hood is considered “a good thing...to calm them down” (56F). Resistance/discomfort is narrated here as being unreasonable and illegitimate. Rather than indicating valid feelings that warrant being listened to, they are problems to thwart and prevail over.

Wadiwel explains such tools and the interactions they are part of, even those that appear benign, are designed “precisely to counter resistance” (2015: 11). They would not exist if their targets were not sentient and autonomous agents that resisted capture and use (ibid: 10). Participants’ accounts indicate the normalised negation of cumulative acts of resistance that progressively ‘necessitate’ “every bit of equipment there is going” (56F), and the levels of discomfort/distress an animal is experiencing to persist in their expressions of defiance.

The notion that horses are capable of successfully resisting situations that cause them discomfort, anxiety, fear, or anger also flies in the face of the entire equine industry and horses’ status as prey animals who derive safety from herd behaviour and strong leadership (equine or human) (Burgon, 2014). Carbone argues, “animals of most species find humans threatening” (2020: 232) and can be expected to modify their behavior when unable to “get their distance from us” (225). This includes hiding pain (Dalla Costa et al., 2014; Mayer, 2007).

There are, therefore, many explanations for the perception that “most horses will do anything they can to help you out” (57F), and that greyhounds are “very affectionate” (29M) towards their handlers. But, as Yi-Fu Tuan emphasises, humans tend “to dissociate power and domination from the world of pleasure, play, and art” (1984: 4)—a dissociation that is magnified in animal-based industries where affection only makes the dominance “softer and more acceptable” (1984: 5).⁷ Human efforts to prevail over animals’ subjectivities are even framed as benevolence. A participant explains humans have a duty to “try to persuade [horses] that they do want to do it. ...if only they understood that...it really is in their best interests to put in and try to be good at this” (26F). But this concern only makes sense in the context and implicit knowledge of the precarious implications for animals of refusing or being ejected from their respective hypertopias.

Contrary to the claim that “you can’t really force a horse to do something...unless it’s a completely broken animal” (41F), horses, and all animals under human sovereignty, are routinely ‘forced’ to do things against their own expressed preferences. However, marked epistemically by the triad of violability, their communications are not seen, ignored, misinterpreted, and overruled. The point at which their communications become glaringly obvious is when they feel they have no other option to be seen and heard. When an animal ‘breaks,’ they have lost all such hope. To arrive at either point, a litany of signals has been passed over. However, some signals are less easily ignored.

⁷ Tuan’s usage of dominance here appears more inclusive than Cudd’s (2006) analytical separation of dominance and oppression (see also Allen, 2008).

5.4. Re-capturing animals’ discomfiting subjectivities

Most participants are aware of some problematic dimensions of these industries and many have borne witness to visible instances of fast and slow violence. The former most frequently relate to horse racing and the latter to zoos.

Nearly two-thirds (19) of race-goers have seen horses fall, sustain injuries, and be ‘humanely’ killed at the track—a “tragedy” that makes one respondent’s “stomach turn over” (29M). Many have “never forgotten” (57F) these moments and remain deeply affected, describing them as “just god awful” (38F), “devastating” (21M), “the worst feeling in the world” (35M). Another explains, “It’s hard to get that image out of your head” (22F). Some imply human culpability, observing “it wasn’t the horse’s choice to go out there and run and break its leg; it was ours” (42F).

In response, participants “feel[s] bad” (22F) and think “I shouldn’t be here, I shouldn’t be getting this much enjoyment when this is likely to happen at least once a day when I’ve been racing” (24F). One becomes especially emotional recalling these experiences:

“There were fallers all around and there were green screens up in two or three different places. ...there were stricken horses and stricken jockeys...[the winner] almost collapsed from exhaustion. ...I just remember walking up to the TV, clicking it off and I just sat there for an hour afterwards just thinking, “Can I carry on like this?” Sorry. Just bear with me a moment. ...I’m filling up a little bit here. Oh. It was a very, very hard experience” (35M).

patrice jones’ and Cheryl Wylie’s (2018) account of dammed feelings resonates here. The emotional impact of the moment, signalling a fissure in the discursive integrity of the hypertopic arrangement, is internalised and distanced from the industry, remembered as a personally “anxious time” (41F), “devastating *for me*” (21M), or simply “not great *for me*” (15F) (emphases added). Fast violence may be more noticeable and memorable due to its intensity and emotional impact. However, provided it remains largely intelligible within the epistemic remit tacitly agreed on for the animal, which is reinforced by the particular industry, it can, for the animal, be ultimately just as unremarkable.

Zoo subjectivities force their way through the hypertopic regime in less dramatic though equally affective ways. It is when “looking into an animal’s eyes” that one respondent experiences “moments of sadness” (38F). Others remember particular animals who “looked sad and upset and bored” (15F), or think about the time they spend in captivity “considering all they know is these four walls” (5M). One participant was particularly affected by a moment of connection with an orangutan:

“I was holding [my daughter] in my arms...and a large female come right up to the glass, and she was putting her hand up to look at the baby. It just sent me in floods of tears. I had to get out of there as soon as possible because it was just so human. It was just such a moment for me, and I’ll never ever forget that moment. That was just, wow. Even thinking about it brings tears back to my eyes” (52F).

Nevertheless, these discomfiting thoughts and feelings are outweighed. Participants feel “a little guilty” (52F) or “a bit bad” (40F), but set against hegemonic understandings of ‘animals’, their functions, and uses, which are intensified at/by these sites, these feelings are not sufficient to suggest imminent changes in practices. The previous race-goer asks:

“How can you justify it? You can’t. ...Are these horses’ deaths worth the enjoyment I get out of it...? It’s a difficult one, and it’s something I’ve wrestled with on many an occasion. ...There isn’t a right or wrong answer, I don’t think” (35M).

“On the fence” (22F) is how many participants describe their position, justified by conceptions of most animals’ lives being as good or better than they would be elsewhere. Participants explain, “for every

one that has a bad story, there are tons with really good stories” (14F), or argue there are “two sides to the coin” (42F). Tragic events are balanced with the understanding that horses live “pretty good lives up until that point” (42F)—“probably better” than those “used for pulling tractors,” or “left out in the rain just with a cover on” (17M). After all, “horses will die standing in fields” (21M).

These accounts echo what Donaldson and Kymlicka call ‘threshold’ arguments in animal rights, where animal use is seen as preferable to non-existence, and permissible providing they are better off than they would otherwise be, thereby legitimising their subordinated status (2013: 91–93).

Professionalized narratives organize these industry’s “problems and responsibilities”—their slow violences—into ‘grooves’ of thinking or “deadly clichés” (Singer, n.d.) carved out over decades and even centuries (Stengers, 2011: 138, on Whitehead). Participants largely trust these narratives and the “capable hands” (3M) of associated experts—“I just kind of trust in the process...they’ll know what they’re doing”(2F). Assurance is derived from the knowledge that “it’s a regulated sport” (23M) or an industry with “high standards” (52F). Perceptions that the UK provides better levels of animal care/welfare are also common. These and other industries are framed as natural laws unto themselves, with their own unassailable logics and momentum that humans are largely helpless to change. Instead, it is about accepting that injury, death, and, in the case of animals in zoos, martyrdom (10M) or “taking one for the team” (50F), are “just part of it” (26F) and, from there, deciding on “acceptable rate[s] of attrition” (21M).

It is possible that the ‘shocks’ of fast violence may lead to long-term change. However, hypertopic spaces curtail their impact by upholding an epistemic and discursive regime that does not easily allow inappropriate emotions to leak out. Animal subjectivities are recaptured at their point of escape because to “tear up, or have trouble functioning” is ‘socially unintelligible’ Stanescu (2012: 568) and “a marker of not belonging” (Collard and Gillespie, 2015: 205). The attention generated by ‘hot,’ more emotionally disruptive moments emphasises the invisibility of the slow violence that is their constant background. However, it also shows that animals’ subjectivities are always glowing under the surface of constructed ways of seeing that are not as permanent or solid as these industries would perhaps like.

6. Discussion

The discursive and affective mechanisms explored in the preceding sections constitute an epistemic framework of ‘affective engagements and general understandings’ (Welch, 2017) that shapes participants’ practices and helps them ‘make sense’. This framework resists destabilisation from sometimes deeply upsetting moments of connection with a particular animal, when other (less acceptable) kinds of affective engagement threaten to leak out of the normally robust container (Gillespie, 2018). These moments cast a glow across the data, a sense of something floating above, across, and between that cannot be adequately captured by words. This glow invites us further in, to explore “where bodily matters simultaneously demand and defy translation into codes and significations” MacLure (2013: 663).

Foregrounding these glimmers or ‘hauntings’ (Gordon, 1997) of animal subjectivities is this paper’s second aim, lifting them above the muddy grooves of ‘expert’ narratives, ordering words, and effacing numbers—abstractions that “abstract[s] from something to which no further attention is paid” (Whitehead, in Stengers, 2011: 138). Like Le Guin, I seek “the nature, subject, words of the other story, the untold one, the life story” (1986: 168). For it is in their retelling that these past stories become present happenings full of possibility in what they can make happen next (Vanini, 2015: 12).

However, the problem remains of how to convey something of the nonhuman other’s world and experiences, to push back against their more prevalent abstractions as Crary and Gruen (2022) also endeavour to do. Animating lifeworlds and representing other ways of knowing are

at the core of non-representational research (Vanini, 2014) and yet it is typically *human* vitality, performativity, corporeality, sensuality, and mobility that are prioritised (for example, Probyn, 2015). A more decisively critical, non-anthropocentric, and methodologically ‘brave’⁸ approach would attempt to sense, feel, and think these (and other) animating qualities entirely through animals’ experience where what is even perceived as an event, relation, doing, affective resonance, or background may be entirely different from that perceived by a human (Vanini, 2015).

Animal narratives or autoethnographies offer one method, and despite their unavoidable human-centrism (Wolfe, 2009), there is broad consensus around their capacity to “afford solidarity-building projections of other creatures’ ways of being in the world” (Herman, 2016: 1) that can “destabilize and question the idea of what it is to be human” (Chakraborty, 2021: 58). Imaginative writing, Nixon argues, can “make the unapparent appear, ... humanizing drawn-out threats inaccessible to the immediate senses” and making us witness to “sights unseen” (2011: 15). Nixon refers explicitly to the capacity of writer-digital-activists and filmmakers such as Rachel Carson, Indra Sinha, Stephanie Black, Abdelrahman Munif and others, to challenge routinized perceptions that downplay the insidious, imperceptible, and unrecognised damage of slow violence (2011). This challenge extends to scholarly norms with Vanini (2014) advocating more creative, performative, and non-traditional writing styles as a way to re-configure thinking.

The following ficto-critical ethnographies are thus intended to perform a kind of discursive ‘butting-in’ (Herman, 2016) on behalf of animals. The narratives are a curated compilation or collage (Freeman, 2020) of information gathered from academic sources, industry websites, forums, and databases, social and other media, previous owners/trainers, zoo stocklists, written communications with zoos, racing boards, personal site-visits, stakeholder accounts, and through professional and advocacy networks. Hence, while “inevitably constructive, or imaginative” (Herman, 2016: 3), the stories draw as much as possible on what can be gleaned about an animal’s life, their biology, movements, behaviours, interactions, preferences, and emotions.

7. Animal biographies

Far from being exceptional, the animals in these stories are routine performers who can be considered average representatives of their conspecifics and co-captives. Knowing nothing of greyhound breeding and naming conventions, the name ‘Droopys Cyclone’ caught my eye in a greyhound database. It happens that Droopy’s Stud is one of Ireland’s biggest greyhound stud and breeding kennels. Noting that several of Droopys Cyclone’s litters are sired by Loughteen Blanco, I looked into him further. Kody Ridge was the first name picked from the Official 2020 horse racing ‘Flat’ Form Book. I flipped the pages and pointed at a name. Kamau was chosen more purposefully. Following a preliminary visit to Chester Zoo where I made notes on several animals, I chose to focus on the lions, a popular and iconic species, and the mandrills, a less popular ‘exhibit.’ I was not particularly drawn to these animals more than others, and decided to see what I found, aware that every animal in the zoo has a story. I could only tell one zoo story here and chose the mandrills.

These biographies are constructed around publicly available information. Names have been changed because details of their lives between this information have been filled in using a collage of information as indicated previously. The key moments in the lives of Loughteen Blanco [Likely Lad] and Kody Ridge [Kelpie Crest] can be verified through industry databases. The paucity of information on Kamau’s life before arriving at Chester Zoo means his story is more constructed. However, he was observed continuously for between two and three consecutive

⁸ A reference to the “fight against methodological timidity” that unites non-representational researchers (Vanini, 2014: 13).

half days (2.5–3 h each) during two summer (September 2020 and July 2021) and two winter (December 2020 and 2021) visits. Responses from zoo staff to written enquiries regarding Kamau were also used. As highlighted in Footnote 5, it is the situations of these animals and what it might be like to live like them that I am inviting readers to reflect on and not the details of their behaviour with respect to each other or the human encounter (see Pederson and Stanescu, 2012: viii).⁹

7.1. Likely lad: The greyhound

Born on a stud farm in Ireland on a cloudy October day, the furry smells, sounds, and touch of my mother and five siblings comprise my entire sightless world for my first two weeks of life (Dogs Trust, 2015). As I gain vision, this world extends beyond a carpet-lined box to a small, hard-floored room covered with newspaper, and an outside concrete area enclosed by wire. At two months old, a familiar hand whisks me sickeningly fast up into the air. My head is gripped tightly while another set of hands squeeze needle-like pins into the flat part of my ear, printing numbers there—my number.

My siblings and I – saplings we’re called - are moved to a ‘rearing’ paddock, 15 m by 6 m. Similar paddocks extend either side, with sheds for shelter and sleep. Three times a week, we’re released into a big field. We run and play, then we’re returned to the paddock. Months pass. I’m made to walk on a leash and wear a muzzle strapped around my mouth and head. I learn commands. Running games become more intense. At 12 months old, I’m moved to a smaller, enclosed kennel with one of my siblings. This is preparation for life with my future trainer or ‘breaker’. Once a day, I’m let out to a 100 m run for 25 min. I’m made to walk on a machine for 20 min every evening.

I’m sent to the ‘breaker’ at 14 months. It’s my first van ride. Different smells, strange dogs, unknown humans, and a new kennel mate. Hard edges and sharp noises, starting traps, rails, running around tight bends where other dogs crowd and get in my way. We bump and collide. Some fall, sometimes badly. My wrist or shoulder often hurt. 23 h a day, my kennel is my world.

I’m entered into my first proper trial, and I win. I win five of my next six races. My owner is very happy. He lives in England. Eleven months pass. Five tracks, 29 races, 15 wins. Then two UK races. Return trips by van and ferry. The next trip is one-way. I’m two and a half and at my ‘racing prime.’ Placed with a new trainer, I’m surrounded by new dogs and a strange kennel mate. My other ear is clamped and marked with more numbers. 16 months pass. Eight tracks, 40 more races. Waiting in a kennel or van for three, sometimes five hours. All for thirty seconds of running.

I win big. The William Hill Classic, the Henlow Derby, the Coral Sussex cup. I’m stood on podiums. Blinded by flashing lights. Deafened by shouts and cheers. People crowd around me, holding a big cup high in the air. ‘Super Lad’ they call me. My picture is on the front of a magazine. I’m ‘spectacular’, the ‘best dog’ (Fig. 2).

Four years old and, after 71 races, past my ‘racing prime.’ But my genes still hold promise. Once a week, I’m led to a bare white room. Two men hold me tight. One uses his hand to make me ejaculate. A muzzled female is there too. Soon, a catheter inside her, she’ll be restrained for my semen, or another’s. After a year of this, I’m loaded into a van. I’ve been bought by a man in Los Angeles. He sells me to a breeding farm in China; ‘Laundered.’ My disembodied semen ‘sires’ another nine litters back in the UK. I’m surrounded by hundreds like me (Fig. 3).

But my ‘stats’ live on – more alive than me. A record of my worth in weight, distance, grade, odds, speed, performance, form, and offspring. A digital memorial to the ‘I’ that is the ‘me’.

⁹ I give as much weight to constructing an interior life that is not directly observable but informed by these animals’ situations, surroundings, and imagined ‘negative space,’ i.e. experiences not witnessed by humans but equally dimensions of their lives (Pederson and Stanescu, 2012).



Fig. 2. Loughteen Blanco’s media stardom (Image: online screen capture of magazine cover).



Fig. 3. Record of Loughteen Blanco in Chinese breeding facility (Image: courtesy of CAGEDNW).

- Coda

Loughteen Blanco had five littermates. Of these, four raced less than 20 times each over a period of 10–20 months, until around three years old. None sired or bore litters and there is no information on what

happened to them. The fifth, Loughteen Sue, ran no races, bore no litters, and is similarly untraceable. A year before being moved to China, Loughteen Blanco sired his last litter with Droopy's Cyclone. Of 11 offspring, one was 'euthanized' trackside after stumbling during a race, three were adopted after exiting racing, and seven are untraceable. Two of these untraceable dogs show a history of being used for breeding.

7.2. *Kelpie crest: The thoroughbred*

'Unruly' they called me, or 'quirky'. A change of attitude was in order. That much was clear after I broke through a railing at my fifth race. I'd had enough. Threw my rider and scampered off into the city under cover of a layer of fog (Fig. 4).

Three weeks later, I was gelded.

I was born in a barn in Ireland and spent the first six months playing in a paddock and sleeping alongside my mother. Then, my training starts.¹⁰ For a year I wear halters, walk on a lead rope, and am made to trot or run round and round in circles. Eventually, I'm 'broken'. Uncomfortable bits of metal are forced into my mouth, more straps are wrapped around my head, saddles strapped on my back, and people sit on me. Running involves metal railings and starting stalls. Anxiety. I'm sold for £20,000, loaded onto a metal container and shipped to England. A new place, strange people, different smells. A daily regime kicks in: high-protein diet and training. It's my second race and I get second place. But, I'm labelled 'tricky', distracted, unsettled. I start getting led to the starting post before the other horses. Trying to calm me down. A month later, I make my rail break, disappearing into the fog.

I don't race for eight months after that. A test of wills ensues. Compliance sought through pain, discomfort, and force. A hood is added to muffle my hearing—for "nervous or highly strung horses." Am I? Because I'm meant to love racing? But I've already been diagnosed. The trainer soon tires of me and another steps in.

Another moving metal container, another new place, more strange people, and different smells. I'm three years old, approaching my 'peak.' I run two or three races a month, hooded up, always led early to post. I do win, once. Four months pass and it's my owner who grows tired of me. I'm lot #802, sold for £2000. No more hood. I win two races of the next eleven, but one of the jockeys is suspended for whipping me more than they should. Steward reports say I 'weaken' in most of my races. I'm still taken to the post before all the others. Trainer tires of me again and another steps in. Rinse and repeat—metal container, travel, new place, people, smells.

How else to be heard and seen? I throw my rider off again. She's fine. Praised for her "incredible determination and persistence" as I twisted and turned, keeping her off me until I could see no point. I was determined too, but 'expert horsemanship' reined me in (Fig. 5).

I was given cheek pieces after that, to make me focus, "see if that gets him over the line."¹¹ Trainer tires of me again—you know the story. Container, travel, new place, people, smells. I'm shipped back to Ireland to race on a beach. I see an opportunity before the start and take it. I'm running down the beach away from everything, riderless, vans tearing after me (Fig. 6). I'm withdrawn from the race. My win, for now.

Lot # 180 at Doncaster auction. No sale and I'm withdrawn. Trainer tires of me again. I'm shipped back to Ireland. Lot #74, sold for £7000 to a new owner. For three-months they re-strategise. I'm returned to the racetrack with new 'kit'—a tongue-tie.¹² This wraps around my tongue and fastens it to my bottom jaw. I'm not sure which is worse. This or the bit I was trying to shift to a more comfortable position and stop my mouth being pulled. I keep running like they want. I keep coming last or second to last. Reports say 'slow away', 'reluctant', 'weakened' or 'no impression'. They add the hood again. Hood plus tongue-tie. I'm

dismounted before the race. I'm led to the post. I'm loaded into the stalls without a rider. I don't want this, any of it. Isn't it obvious? 'Treated like royalty.' 11 months pass and 11 races. Back in the UK. Lot #57 at Doncaster. Withdrawn again. I'm five and a half. Obviously 'a rogue'¹³ and past my peak, though my bones are only now just finishing growing. There's no official record of where I am now. Being a gelding, I have no breeding value. Rumour is my last trainer sold me to someone in Germany.

My numbers live on. My gender, colour, pedigree, racing stats, distances, performance rating, and sales collated together in one easy to read form.

- *Coda*

Over three and a half years and 36 races, Kody Ridge had six different trainers, changed owners seven times, and was ridden by 21 different jockeys. Commenting on his racing history, Dean Stansall observes, "he got passed down a line of trainers and owners and ended up being badly placed with little understanding of what he could have achieved if handled differently."

7.3. *Kismet: The mandrill*

I was eight when I arrived in England. Up until then, I'd lived at the zoo in Austria where I was born, still with my Mum and Dad. In the wild, I could have stayed close to them, as part of a bigger group—hordes is the word you use—of 300 or more. But that doesn't work in zoos, especially when my primary purpose is to breed. I am, or my 'species' is, part of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria ex-situ breeding programme. We're bred in captivity to remain in captivity.

There were 10 females in the bigger enclosure next to me. I've learned a bit about them now, and how the rest of my life will likely proceed, if I'm lucky. Just before I arrived, the head of their group, KT, died, or was 'euthanised.' He was 26. KT was bought in the Czech republic at five years old by a well-known animal 'exchange'—a zoo clearing house for 'surplus livestock'. In later years, he started gaining weight and got osteoarthritis. 21 years he lived here. He'd been a TV star and fathered 29 children including Lupa and Jessop who were also TV stars. But they died too, simply "passed away" according to the zoo, both within a year of KT. They were only seven or eight. No one will tell me why or how, and the zoo doesn't have to disclose that. We are a single line item in the zoo's annual stocklists—*Mandrillus sphinx*—and records show two male mandrills died in 2017, and another the following year, the year I arrived.

Once I'm allowed in the main enclosure with the females, I have to be constantly vigilant. They keep warning me off because I'm a stranger, and too young, small, and skinny to be accepted as a leader. A couple of lower ranking ones are more accepting. Things are tough for several months until the dominant female accepts me. At one point, they shut me in a smaller section of our cage, adjacent to the big one, with one of the friendlier females. The floor area is about 5 m by 7 m, maybe a third of the size of the main enclosure, or less, except we can't get outside (Fig. 7).

I keep running, round and round, and up and back the fence line next to the others, over and over and over, watching them, wanting to be with them. If I sit against the bars, we can manage to groom each other a little, poking our fingers through the small metal squares. I race around the cage in a frenzy, leaping at the glass with a loud bang as I circuit, two, three, four times. The humans watching me find this funny, entertaining. Tap on the glass and whistle. I'm getting better at blocking them out.

I stare up at the fence, checking for gaps I know aren't there. Clinging to the wire as I gaze through at the others (Fig. 8). I hear a kid say, "I think he's sad he can't get out of there."¹⁴ My companion paces a lot too, or gazes at the foliage on the other side of the glass (Fig. 9).

¹⁰ See: Bowman (2020), Henry (n.d.), RoR (n.d.), Horse and Hound (2005).

¹¹ Quote from trainer's Facebook commentary, 14th June 2019.

¹² See: Short (2022), RSPCA (2019).

¹³ Quote from trainer's Facebook commentary, 14th June 2019.

¹⁴ Documented visitor commentary, field notes.



Ste.A
@sarm0161

Kody Ridge has smashed through the rail and is currently running around Bath City Centre and is still being backed. Mentalists.

8:33 PM · Jun 29, 2016 · Twitter for iPhone

Fig. 4. Twitter commentary on Kody Ridge at Bath.



Fig. 5. Still from video footage of Race 1, at Carlisle, 6th August 2018 (Available: <https://twitter.com/i/status/1026558535465721856>).

They keep us in here, secluded, for three whole days. We just walk around and wait for feeding times. I drag and chew on logs for a bit. Hour after hour, nothing changes. Three days turn into four. Another two females are added to our group, but we still can't get outside and I still don't understand why we're being excluded.

A few months later, our whole troop is moved to the cage next door. It's bigger with more things to climb and places to go. Sometimes the Lion-tailed Macaques next door kick off noisily. We get agitated too then, some of us run around screeching and banging on the connecting hatch. A momentary break in our routine. Every morning, food arrives between 11am and 12 pm, and again in the afternoon between 3.30 and 4 pm. Sometimes keepers hide the food in crevices or scatter it on the roof of the cage so we have to squeeze it through the wire—enrichment it's called.

A year after my arrival, I confirm my value to 'conservation' with two babies, born into the breeding programme where they will remain, if they're lucky. An "adorable" boost to visitor numbers. Protecting and safeguarding us for the future. The ventilation systems clicks on and off every 7–8 min throughout the day, its constant hum the backdrop to our

lives of sitting, foraging, and existing. But then, I don't know any different.

- Coda

Captive male mandrills live an average 46 years. At 26, JC (KT) therefore died quite prematurely. According to the zoo, Kamau and his female companion were being isolated to make it "less stressful" for them and "smoother and safer" for the veterinary team to conduct "a routine health check." They were separated for at least four days. However, it is not known when they were first isolated or released. These questions were posed but went unanswered. In the wild, these mandrills—a troop of 10 females and one male—would live in female-based groups of 300 to over 800 individuals (Abernethy et al., 2006; Hongo, 2014) with males over 3–4 years comprising around 20 % of the population. Daily range is between two and eight square kilometres within home ranges of between nine and over a hundred square kilometres (Brockmeyer et al., 2015; White et al., 2010). There is no record of mandrills in zoo-affiliated breeding programmes being released to the wild, and no publicly available information on these breeding programmes—their aims, methods, or outcomes.

8. Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that violence towards animals is intensified at particular sites, or hypertopia, where their oppression, domination, and exploitation become locally magnified and solidified. In contrast to Foucault's heterotopia as spaces "whose functions are different or even the opposite of others" (Foucault, 2002: 361), the functions of hypertopia are intensification. Zoos, and racing events, where animals are spectacularised and visually consumed, are just two such sites used here to illustrate and support this argument. However, the Animal-Industrial Complex (A-IC), encompassing the entire scope of animal uses, can be understood to comprise a multitude of hypertopia (a hypertopology) linked, sustained by, and in turn reinforcing everyday practices. Dominant conceptions of violence prioritise intentional physical harm, focus on the act more than its effects, and thereby perpetuate understandings of violence based on what it looks like rather than how it is felt. In response, I contend that slow violence, with its 'gradual deaths and destructions', also needs to be considered part of the complex of violence that is an effect of hypertopic sites and the social hegemony they shape and are shaped by. Slow violence is equal in importance to the fast, hot, and spectacular violence that receives greater attention.

One of this paper's goals was to bring the concept of slow violence into thinking about the lives of all commodified animals, but especially those commodified in ways commonly perceived as less purposefully violent. The preceding accounts demonstrate that captive animals and those used in racing routinely experience all the listed forms slow violence—captivity, isolation, loss of control, sensory deprivation, material restriction, physical and psychological stress, and theft of life-time. Future analyses could more closely examining how these violences are constituted in each case, and in what ways they are similar/different. This compendium of slow violences broadens the scope and specificity of



Fig. 6. Twitter commentary on Kody Ridge's beach break.

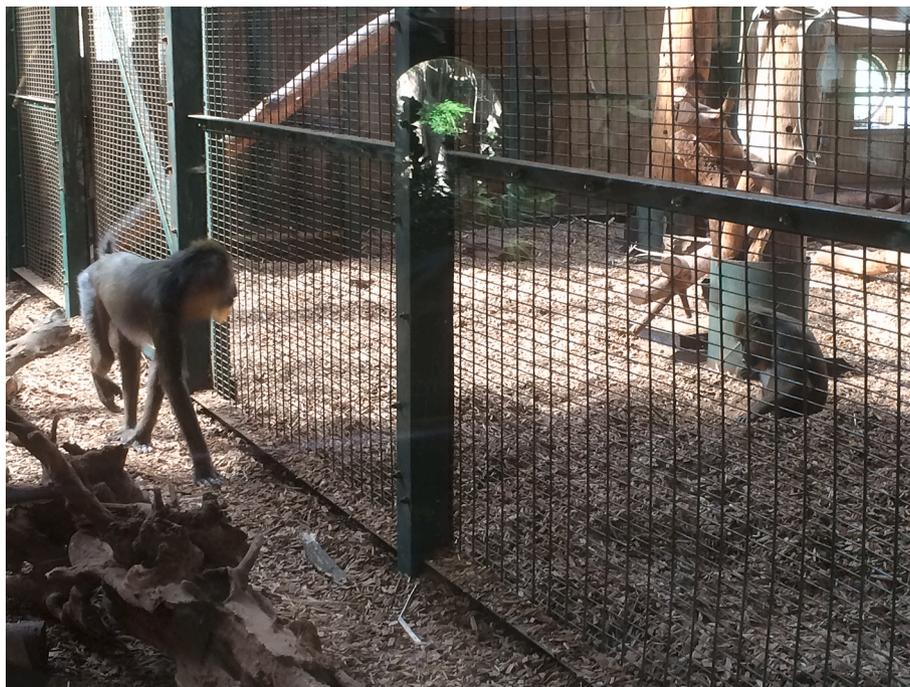


Fig. 7. Kamau pacing the fence line from his exclusion cage (Author's image).

animal harms, and offers greater clarity in conceptions of, and measuring progress towards, animal liberation.

The essential effect of violence towards animals is the violation of their subjectivities, enabled by their designation as 'animal', property, and resource. Based on interviews and observational research, I used indicators of this violation—the aggregation, negation, instrumentalisation, narrativisation, and re-capturing of animal's subjectivities—at zoos and racing events to examine how, within hypertopic arrangements, slow and also fast violence can be visible but remain unseen, or are seen through 'encoded eyes'. Notably, acknowledgements of certain discomfiting effects of both slow and fast violence, however memorable, tend to be mitigated by the constructed legitimacy and authority of the

associated industries, and thence their practices, which leverage, benefit from, and further legitimate broader, ethically-infused discourses of welfare, care, education, and conservation. These instrumentalised and persistently speciesist discourses are built upon, and located firmly within, the triadic scaffold of animals' violability and could thus all be understood as 'mechanisms of control' (Giraud and Hollin, 2016) within practices based on using animals, shaping their teleoaffectivities in ways that aim to foreclose inappropriate conceptions and recognition of animals' subjectivities.

However, such recognitions do occasionally leak through cracks in these hypertopic regimes, sometimes momentarily and other times more memorably. These glimmers show there are opportunities to emphasise



Fig. 8. Kamau gazing through the fence to the rest of the troop (Author's image).



Fig. 9. Kamau huddles in the rear corner next to the fence line as his female companion gazes absently at foliage on the other side of the viewing glass (Author's image).

animals' subjective experiences in these and all animal-based industries, building on existing discomfiting associations and alternate discourses—of violence, oppression, animal agency and others—while at the same time systematically challenging and dismantling anthropocentric discourses of care, welfare, education, and conservation.

The latter task is ongoing in Animal studies but should be undertaken more rigorously in animal and environmental advocacy. In relation to the former, the final section of the paper offers one way of countering animals' desubjectification by constructing contra-narratives, experienced and imagined, that reassemble their subjectivities in ways that highlight the effects of unseen slow violence. Such alternate stories—encapsulating full biographies that accentuate the geographical

and temporal scope of the violence complex (slow and fast), are important for sharpening the lens of advocacy efforts, broadening and clarifying understandings of animal suffering, harm, and what counts as violence (from whose perspective?), and generating visions for how things could/should/need to be otherwise that are more meaningful for animals.

For some, the constructed, imaginative, and non-empirical dimensions of animal biographies, whether textual, visual, aural, tactile, olfactory, or combinations thereof, may be challenging, especially in the context of more traditional research methods. However, they offer the only way to animate an approximation of nonhuman lifeworlds translated for human understanding, allowing the contours of a landscape to

emerge, from hypertopia to heterotopia and everything between, shaped by degrees of intensification of human violations of animal subjectivities and the lived experience of their violent effects. Animal biographies provide another tool against their commodification and exploitation—one that can help create cracks or “lines of fragility” (Foucault, 1988: 36) in prevailing structures of thinking, doing, and saying. Given the worsening global situation for most animals, and poor progress of advocacy efforts, every tool is needed.

In sum, unsettling speciesism and anthropocentrism requires more than critiques of fast violence. Extending understandings of what constitutes violence against animals is therefore proposed as a means of launching a more serious challenge to practices that continue to pass as mostly benign and benevolent. In order to move towards an absence of violent effects on animals, consensus is needed first on the conception of these effects as violence, and then on the practices that constitute them. It is not assumed that eliminating violence equates to animals’ liberation or freedom from oppression, but it is surely a necessary condition. As Reingard Spannring comments:

Only when we can recognize subjectivity do we have the possibility of enabling citizenship, a politicized ethic of care, and a political more-than-human community. [...] ‘contaminating’ ourselves with animal subjectivity has profound implications... and offers ‘wild possibilities’ for an ethical and sustainable more-than-human-world. (2019: 16).

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Paula Arcari: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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