

Technologies of Factory Farming: An Exploration of Ongoing Confrontations with Farm Animal Sanctuaries

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Abstract : This research aims to study the contentions that Farm Animal Sanctuaries pose to human-animal relationships in modernity, which have developed as a result of globalisation of the meat industry and advancements in technology. The sociological history of human-animal relationships in farming is contextualised in order to set a foundation for the follow-up examination of challenges to existing human-(farm)animal relationships by Farm Animal Sanctuaries. The methodology was influenced by relativism, and the method involved three semi-structured small-group interviews, conducted at locations of sanctuaries. The sample was chosen through purposive sampling and varied by location and size of the sanctuary. Data collected were transcribed and qualitatively coded to generate themes. Findings revealed that sanctuary contentions to established human-animal relationships by factory farming could be divided into 4 broad categories - Revealing horrors of factory farming (involving uncovering power relations in agribusiness); transforming relationships with animals (including letting them emotionally heal in accordance with their individual personalities and treating them as partial-pets); educating the public regarding welfare conditions in factory farms as well as animal sentience through practical experience or positive imagery of farm animals, and addressing retaliation made by agribusiness in the form of technologies or discursive strategies. Hence, this research concludes that The human-animal relationship in current times has been characterised by - (ideological and physical) distance from farm animals, commodification due to increased chasing of profits over welfare and exploitation using technological advancements, creating unequal power dynamics that rid animals of any agency. Challenges to this relationship can be influenced by local populations around the sanctuary but not so dependent upon the size of it. This research can benefit from further academic exploration into farm animal sanctuaries and their role in feminist animal rights activism to enrich the ongoing fight against intensive farming.

Keywords : animal rights, factory farming, farm animal sanctuaries, human-animal relationships

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