

Introduction

This is an alternate story of Ireland, one that centers its largest demographic—Nonhuman Animals—and their contribution to the country’s development. This is not just a telling of nonhuman experiences, but, critically, how those experiences have also shaped that of humans, and how *ideas* about other animals influence Irish culture. This dynamic is a complicated and often conflicting one. Representations of Nonhuman Animals are copious and cherished in the story of Ireland, but their presence is also treated as marginal and overlooked by academics and policy-makers alike. The politics of postcolonialism compound this mixed acknowledgment of other animals, since Ireland, a marginal space itself, often goes ignored in general. Beloved though it may be in the modern global imagination, the adulation of Ireland as a “land of a thousand welcomes” is often patronizing. As Britain’s oldest colony, Ireland is generally regarded in the postcolonial landscape as warm and friendly, quaint and simple, sometimes backward, and ultimately a peripheral player on the world stage. In other words, Ireland can easily be dismissed as inconsequential to political discourses and the humans and other animals inhabiting it remain understudied and underappreciated. This book aims to challenge this dual marginalization of Ireland’s inhabitants. In a country so shaped by colonial foodways, what happens to Nonhuman Animals matters. The historical entanglement of human and nonhuman experiences with colonial oppression is a key factor in Ireland’s social and political trajectory, while more than two centuries of Irish Nonhuman Animal rights activism and development in alternative foodways illustrate how the casualties of colonialism might successfully undermine longstanding systems of oppression.

I find the relative invisibility of Nonhuman Animals to be problematic, given their considerable importance to determining the human condition.

For that matter, Nonhuman Animals, as sentient persons who are vulnerable to human supremacy and colonial violence, could be greatly served by scholarly attention. Other sociologists agree. The sociological subfield of *animals and society*, which developed at the end of the twentieth century (Peggs 2012), examines the material role that Nonhuman Animals play in the historical progress (or regress) of human societies (York and Mancus 2013), the symbolic role that Nonhuman Animals play in the delineation of what it means to be human (Hobson-West 2007), and the possibility for Nonhuman Animal rights or liberation (Taylor and Sutton 2018). Sociology primarily seeks to qualify and quantify the influence of institutions, systems, and relationships on the making and maintenance of human society. Despite the countless ways in which Nonhuman Animals factor into these processes, the sociological discipline has largely overlooked the relationships between humans and other animals (Arluke 2002), thus opening the door to a great frontier of potential inquiry.

According to the critical *Marxist perspective* on social progress, both history and knowledge emerge as social constructions that serve to remember or manufacture reality in support of the prevailing economic system. Since the exploitation of Nonhuman Animals has undergirded most modern human societies, it is useful to critically analyze the making of meaning and memory for a more robust understanding of social relations. Historical records and experiences that do not contribute to this economic project are easily forgotten or erased. What is more, if they are deemed a threat, they are subject to vilification or trivialization. Nonhuman Animals have experienced all of these mechanisms of ideological control under a human supremacist system that sociologists refer to as *speciesism* (Nibert 2003). Telling the story of Nonhuman Animals in relation to human society is thus a political act of resistance, given its potential to unveil hidden systems of inequality.

The magnitude of nonhuman involvement in human society, from the injustice of colonialization to the consequences of climate change, is thus a story worth telling. Not all sociologists subscribe to a conflict-oriented Marxist perspective on society, but for those who do, systems of power and oppression are seen to constitute a creative dynamism that can propel a society toward more equitable social arrangements. Marx famously envisioned a society in which each inhabitant would be free to live up to their species potential. Indeed, it has been argued that Marx also recognized Nonhuman Animals as victims of economic oppression and that the degradation of humanity's most vulnerable was closely aligned with that of other animals (Foster and Clark 2018). Although Marx's plan for a more equitable future

based on communal ownership over the means of production has for the most part failed to take root (contemporary scholars have rightly argued that Marx could not have predicted the complexity and magnitude of late stage capitalism) (Craib 1997), he did recognize that a reconfiguring of the false consciousness harbored by those laboring in the system would be a critical initial step in the dismantling of an oppressive social system.

In the twentieth century, political theorist and sociologist Antonio Gramsci expanded on Marx's observations from an Italian prison where he had been incarcerated for his socialist organizing. Gramsci, given his personal circumstances, was all too aware that entire cultures could be swayed by the dominant classes to suit their interests. Unlike Marx, however, he put a greater emphasis on the strength of *hegemony* (the domination of a particular power structure and its associated ideologies for the purposes of manipulating societal values and mores and, subsequently, the manufacture of a populace's consent to be ruled) in normalizing oppression (Adamson 2014). States, he recognized, could dictate and thus politicize culture for the purposes of preserving their power. This manufactured consent was far more potent than violent oppression, which could easily be recognized as coercive and unjust. It would not be enough to simply awaken oppressed persons to these hidden societal mechanisms, as Marx prescribed, or even for those persons to rise in revolt; they would need to create a *counter*-hegemony to facilitate change by normalizing alternative values and earning the consent of the people. Otherwise, social change was unlikely to be lasting, if it could be achieved at all.

Marx and Gramsci applied much of this political thought to the condition of the human populace, but the horrific conditions facing billions of Nonhuman Animals across the globe demonstrate just how insidious exploitative economic modes of production can be. Sociologists David Nibert (2013) and Bob Torres (2007) observe that other animals are doubly burdened by the complicity of the humans who exploit them for economic means and the cognitive and corporal manipulation of domestication that undermines their ability to protest their treatment. This is not to say that some Nonhuman Animals do not recognize and resist their oppression, as many of them do. Instead, I argue that it behooves scholars and activists alike to critically reexamine narratives of humans and other animals that normalize, rationalize, or otherwise apologize for inherently unequal and oppressive circumstances.

Although this effort is already well underway in the West and increasingly in the developing world, particularly with the rise of species-inclusive

postcolonial studies (J. M. Davis 2016; Deckha 2013; Nibert 2013), many regions that are pivotal to the global economic exploitation of other animals remain seriously understudied, if not outright ignored. This book presents Ireland as an overlooked but critical site for the manifestation of global capitalist oppression. As Britain's first colony in the modern world system, many of the toxic anthropocentric patterns of power and brutality that reverberate across human-nonhuman relations today can be traced to this island. I argue that a serious examination of speciesism in colonial and postcolonial Ireland will illuminate the intersectional nature of oppression as a historical and contemporary phenomenon in human society. In doing so, I attempt to raise colonized humans and other animals from the margins of existing discourse and spotlight their sufferings, struggles, and contributions.

The Case for Irish Animal Studies

The importance of Nonhuman Animals to the Irish way of life is unmistakable. Outnumbering human inhabitants considerably, Irish cows sprawl across the countryside as they have since Neolithic times. Thousands of visitors board boats and brave the cold Atlantic waters hoping to spot whales off the coast of Cork or meet Fungi the free-living dolphin in Dingle's harbor. Motorists on the backroads of rural counties must navigate herds of free-roaming sheeps, and Aran "wool" sweaters have come to symbolize rural Irish life. Wolfhounds, horse "racing," and Irish "beef" and "butter" have also become synonymous with its geography. Tourists pay handsome sums to gaze at the illuminated manuscripts in the Book of Kells, cathedral adornments, and ancient carved standing stones, all peppered with the likenesses of other animals. It would indeed be difficult to imagine Ireland without the presence and contributions of Nonhuman Animals.

These contemporary encounters with other animals, however, are but an extension of thousands of years of human-nonhuman relations. As with many premodern cultures, Nonhuman Animals were central to the ways of living and knowing in early Ireland. However, with the coming of the Celts and Christians, this relationship was magnified such that early Ireland can only be described as an animist society. Early historical accounts, mythology, and folklore absolutely teem with the exploits of Nonhuman Animals as they intersect with human activities and imaginations (Green 1992). Many place names derive from names given to other animals, especially Gaelic words for pig (*torc* and *muc*) (Mac Con Iomaire 2003) and cow (*bó*) (Mac Coitir

2010). The early Irish acknowledged other animals almost as equals. In fact, the traditional Irish diet was considerably plant-based until industrialization and modernization would make animal products cheaper, more accessible, and nearly unavoidable.

After the Celts, this entanglement persisted into the Middle Ages in perhaps a less forgiving manner. Famed historiographer Gerald of Wales, for instance, visited Ireland on behalf of the Norman colonizers with the task of documenting Irish culture, be it factual or fantastical. Gerald recorded many supernatural tales of human-nonhuman interactions in addition to his general anthropological and zoological observations. Courts in faraway medieval England gave ear to Gerald's accounts of pontificating werewolves, humanoid creatures produced by bestiality, and men who could take the form of fishes. He certainly embellished for the purposes of entertainment, but the medieval Irish themselves boast a rich history of animal-centric folklore. Supernatural beings who traverse the human-nonhuman boundary, such as banshees and faeries, abound in old tales, as do more familiar species such as hares, ravens, and horses. Nonhuman Animals, in other words, permeate the physical and cultural landscapes of Ireland, both then and now. For this reason, at least, it makes sense to acknowledge Nonhuman Animals as active and ever-present contributors to Irish society.

FOOD AND PROTEST

Although the special role that Nonhuman Animals held in the Irish imagination clearly persists into modern times, Christian expansion, Norman conquest, and British colonization would ensure that relationships with other animals would become exceedingly human supremacist in nature. *Colonization* refers to the control or settlement of a region for the purposes of economic expansion and exploitation. Britain, in particular, relied on the exploitation of other animals (as well as the animalization of marginalized humans) to fuel and justify its global expansion and project of civilization (Thomas 1991). Perhaps most damaging for Nonhuman Animals, these cultural injections significantly increased “meat” and dairy production in Ireland and, as a consequence, their associated environmental tolls. The oppression of Nonhuman Animals, furthermore, was tightly linked with the increased oppression of the Irish under colonialism. The production of animal commodities swelled and did so primarily for the benefit of the British people and at the expense of the Irish peasantry. This process would famously push the Irish onto the potato, a vulnerability that would spell

disaster when crops tragically failed. In several counties, food protests erupted as communities retaliated against threats of hunger and want. More than a means of procuring sustenance in a system that had failed so many, these campaigns challenged the legitimacy of the system itself (J. Kelly 2017).

Ireland was both bestialized and feminized under this colonization (O'Connor 2010); it was conceptualized as savage, wild, uncivilized, pagan, and in need of control and domestication. Sociologist Norbert Elias ([1939] 2000) has contended that the West's move to the modern nation-state system (a transition that consolidated power) was accompanied by a process of civilization. This *civilizing process* encouraged (and often mandated) greater control over bodies, emotions, and behaviors. Self-restraint and proper manners (defined by dominant classes and dominant nations) became markers of social superiority. In many ways, they also became markers of humanity itself, given that emotional excitability, basic bodily functions, sexual intercourse, and other "animal-like" behaviors were deemed uncivilized. Consequently, those who existed on society's margins, be they human or nonhuman, became vulnerable to all manner of violent mechanisms of control and discipline.

As republicanism came to a head at the end of the nineteenth century, many nationalists, particularly suffragettes, recognized this shared oppression at the intersection of sexism, colonialism, and speciesism. Vegetarianism came to be associated with the radical thinking of Irish liberation. A number of prominent nationalists and advocates of women's rights were vegetarian, such as Eva Gore-Booth, Charlotte Despard, and Annie Besant. More precariously, republicans would employ the old Gaelic tactic of hunger striking during the Troubles of the latter half of the twentieth century to protest ongoing British imperialism (O'Malley 1990). Food and consumption, this book aims to underscore, are always political in the shadow of colonialism.

Food memory in Ireland is compelling, and consumption patterns are deeply connected to the Irish identity. The Great Famine (*An Gorta Mór*), the most devastating of several agricultural collapses in the early nineteenth century, which resulted in the death of over a million Irish peasantry, was a watershed moment in Irish history. Its legacy created considerable bitterness, and, relatedly, it inspired a complete rethinking of Ireland's position in the United Kingdom. Land reformers later in the century, for instance, battled absentee landlords for fairer distribution of agricultural resources. One such landlord, Charles Boycott, who owned land in County Mayo, attempted to suppress protest with harsh penalties, but would himself be undermined as tenants and community members completely withdrew their cooperation. Indeed, the popular activist tactic of "boycott" derives from this early Irish

campaign (Marlow 1973). Nonhuman Animals, especially those who are conceptualized as food, have thus been at the root of colonial oppression in Ireland. Yet, as this book will suggest, they have also been at the heart of resistance. The legacy of colonial-era speciesism informs development in today's sustainable and regional food production, as it is generally employed to attain Irish self-sufficiency and competitiveness in an international market.

IRISH ANIMAL RIGHTS

In general, shifts in Ireland's agricultural economy have been especially harmful for Nonhuman Animals, as they have resulted in the institutionalization of speciesism and the large-scale violence it entails, but this sordid history has also supported the growth of Irish Nonhuman Animal advocacy. I suggest that a sort of prototypical vegan Irish ethic has shaped Irish society for thousands of years, fluctuating in relation to various economic conditions and political regimes. Here, I do not apply the dietary definition of veganism, but rather a more contentious variation. From the sociological perspective, *veganism* is a political resistance to speciesism that resists the exploitation and oppression of other animals (Cole and Morgan 2011a; Torres 2007; Wrenn 2016). It is both ideological and protest-oriented. Because the primary human behavior related to this oppression is consumptive, veganism necessarily challenges all aspects of humanity's Nonhuman Animal consumption, including eating them, wearing them, using them for entertainment, using them for product development (such as is done in scientific testing), and using their labor. Veganism involves more than food: it is a social justice theory that reimagines humanity's relationship to other species.

The use of other animals, I argue, takes place within a human supremacist order of relations. What I mean is that *use* is inherently exploitative and invariably causes harm to other animals, who have limited capacity to consent to their being used. Nonhumans the world over, whether directly or indirectly, are impacted by human economic activities, particularly so in today's state of environmental crisis. For these reasons, it is difficult to exaggerate the malevolence of anthropocentrism in human-nonhuman relations. Ireland's social structure is exceptional in this regard. It has been shaped by several projects of colonization across several hundred years, which have successively aggravated speciesism, but it has also harbored a penchant for egalitarianism harkening back to older Gaelic societies. I point to this dynamism as a tension from which a more equitable future Ireland can be realized. It may also provide a lesson for vegan efforts elsewhere in the

postcolonial world. Indeed, analyses of Ireland in this context can be useful in “retrieving the different rhythms of historically marginalized cultures” and can deliver “alternative conceptions of culture and of social relations that account for their [marginalized cultures] virtual occlusion from written history” (Lloyd 2003, 62). What is more, this area of analysis offers a “different knowledge” with the potential to “convert the damage of history into the terms for future survival” (62). Perfect conditions are not necessary before meaningful efforts for social justice can begin; activists need only recognize and mobilize preexisting values and traditions that already align with their goal of an equitable and fair society. This repurposing of Irish values, new and old, is one aim of this book.

I argue that, as is true of many traditional societies, Ireland enjoys a comparatively egalitarian past, but this has been tested by the strains of colonization, which include intergroup divisiveness and entrenched speciesism. The spirit of Irish resistance is fierce, however, and new developments in social justice arenas may well release Ireland from the lingering burdens of colonialism, including those that are imposed on other animals. Although this book is one of the first to seriously examine this concept in the Irish context, animality has been pivotal to the maintenance of unequal relations in a number of other similarly situated regions. For instance, the Catholic Church brought to vote the humanness of Indigenous Americans in the sixteenth century, as their categorization as animals had been used to justify their subjugation (Stogre 1992). In parts of Africa, race was explicitly constructed vis-à-vis animalization by colonialists eager to insert divisiveness to facilitate control. In countries such as Zimbabwe, postcolonial land disputes would politicize Nonhuman Animals further as white settlers pushed for control and Indigenous Blacks strove for sovereignty. Nonhuman Animals were objectified as “livestock,” tourism-attracting safari ingredients, and poaching victims (Suzuki 2017). Likewise, elephants were utilized in the colonization of Burma, made complicit in resource extraction and empire expansion (Saha 2017). In nearby India, scholars have examined how post-colonial politics maintained Indian dependence through the imposition of Western, animal-based foodways that displaced traditional systems, diminished health, and eroded identity (Gaard 2013). Gambert and Linné (2018) have noted this trend elsewhere in Asia, with stereotypes of effeminate plant-based eating used even today to maintain racialized colonial hierarchies. In such cases, Nonhuman Animals became collateral damage, suffering in droves to feed colonialist aims. The relationship between colonial domination, land grabbing, food conquest, animalization and racialization, and the

exploitation of Nonhuman Animals is thus a well-documented one in the postcolonial world, positioning Ireland as another important case study in this larger narrative.

Vegan Intersectionality as a Guiding Perspective

These numerous intersections indicate that Nonhuman Animals have been pivotal to the Irish imagination and experience, but these are only a few examples from a much more complex entanglement. This book considers three areas of inquiry in pursuit of the story. First, I argue that Nonhuman Animals are an essential but underexamined component to the country's cultural, political, and economic infrastructure. Second, the oppression of Nonhuman Animals made necessary by this infrastructural reliance is tightly bound to the oppression of humans, be they colonial subjects, tenants, immigrants, women, Travellers, or postcolonialists struggling in the global arena. Third, there has been robust Irish resistance to the exploitation of other animals, and often this resistance intersects with civil rights efforts for humans as well. Irish studies have, for the most part, ignored these three points. Invisibilizing the struggles of Nonhuman Animals is not only an act of remarkable ignorance given the magnitude of their numbers and their suffering, but it is also a distortion of the human condition. For even the most anthropocentric of scholars, an honest incorporation of Nonhuman Animal studies is worth pursuing, given the connectivity between human and nonhuman experiences. One need not be vegan to appreciate the sociological importance of Nonhuman Animals in human society.

The *vegan feminist theory* I employ herein emphasizes that the relationship between humans and nonhumans in Ireland is a reciprocal, mutually influential one. *Black feminism* introduced this concept of *intersectionality*, which can be traced at least as far back as the early nineteenth century. Straddling the male space of the American abolitionist movement and the white-centric space of the budding feminist movement, Sojourner Truth, a former slave, pressed her audiences to consider how her experiences with sexism and her experiences with racism could not be separately understood. That is, systems of oppression do not operate fully independently. Laboring on a plantation while surviving on meager rations and lamenting the loss of multiple children to the slave trade, Truth faced tribulations that were bound to her female experience but foreign to the wealthy white women leading the feminist movement. A failure to recognize the interlocking nature of various

systems of oppression offered a problematically incomplete analysis of social injustice. Finding herself excluded from both male-dominated abolitionist work and white-dominated feminism, an exasperated and invisibilized Truth famously queried in Akron, Ohio in 1851: “Ain’t I a woman?”

More than a century of mobilization and scholarship would develop these early observations, culminating in the work of author bell hooks (1982) who would reignite Truth’s question in her own contribution to intersectional feminist theory, *Ain’t I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. For hooks, these layers of oppression were significantly more complicated. More than sexism and racism, hooks’s interpretation of entwining marginalizations also included a critique of capitalist and colonial systems, what she termed the “imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.” She was also deeply critical of the consumption practices of the dominant class that so characteristically undergird capitalist and colonial aims. Marginalized groups were vulnerable to figurative cultural consumption as well as the literal consumption of their bodies and labor (1992). This consumption not only entailed considerable violence against people of color, women, and colonized peoples, but it served the symbolic function of maintaining their status as “other.”

Many other academics and activists were busily contributing to the dialogue, leading to a resurgence of topical interest in the 1990s highlighted by sociologist Patricia Hill Collins’s “matrix of domination” theory (1990) and legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1991) concept of “intersectionality.” Scholar activists Angela Davis, Aph Ko (2019), and Breeze Harper (2010) would extend these frameworks even further to include the plight of Non-human Animals, while ecofeminists also introduced the exploitation of the environment as relevant (Gaard 1993). What is important to extract from these feminist contributions is the notion that no oppression stands alone, identity categories are manufactured and divisive, and that consumption practices are highly political. Both colonial studies and feminism have examined the trajectory of Ireland, but space remains to incorporate a nonhuman perspective. What might be uncovered if species and animality were granted relevance?

I subsequently apply intersectionality to this analysis, grounding the cultural, political, and economic developments of Ireland in the context of trans-species oppression. In doing so, I also utilize a critical vegan lens, with veganism applied in its political sense as a shorthand for species-inclusive intersectionality. More than a diet, I have argued that veganism is an ideology and praxis of species egalitarianism that is sharply critical of human supremacy and the institutionalized (as well as noninstitutionalized)

exploitation of Nonhuman Animals. It is a radical epistemology, to be sure, but it is applied here as a means of demarcating attitudes, behaviors, systems, and histories that challenge the traditional anthropocentric treatment of other animals. And, more than a collection of theories and ideas, vegan feminist theory is backed by emerging social psychological research that presents quantified evidence as to the intersecting nature of human and nonhuman processes of dehumanization and its effects (Hodson, Dhont, and Earle 2020; Kasperbauer 2018).

Vegan feminist scholars such as Carol Adams (2000) have unpacked this species-inclusive intersectionality at length, but few have applied the aforementioned Marxist lens to develop a critique of the state and economic relations (Wrenn 2017). Nibert (2002) and Torres (2007) are two exceptions, advancing a *vegan socialist theory* that explicitly argues that the entanglement of human-nonhuman oppression emerges from a society's economic mode of production. Acknowledging this intersection and its material roots will be necessary to challenge and restructure these unequal and frequently violent relations. It is this sort of Marxian vegan feminism that I apply to the Irish case study, given how strongly the culture has been shaped by the state, its economic endeavors, and the resulting nature of human-nonhuman relations.

Despite these correlations, most modern societies have not opted to challenge the many intersecting oppressions fanned by nation-building. They have entered the fray and exacerbated them instead. In this vein, Laura Wright (2015) introduced the concept of *vegan studies* as a means of exploring both vegan practice and identity within the context of nationalism. As this book will demonstrate, the tensioned relationship between food and nationalism has been and continues to be relevant for Ireland. As Ireland's relationship to Britain fractured, the country might have utilized alternative, egalitarian economies to realize its dream for independence, healthy interdependence with other global players, and long-term sustainability. Should it have done so, it would have had a rich history of communal living and vegetarian farming in Ireland from which to draw inspiration. Although this book attempts to highlight some attempts to reimagine Ireland in this more affirming manner, it has generally been the case that Ireland has opted to remain complicit with an economic system and national identity that are harmful to vulnerable humans and other animals. In any case, Wright is correct to emphasize that food ethics shape the identity, aspirations, and embodied experiences of a nation state and its citizenry. I subsequently draw on Wright's concept of *animal nationalism* to examine the role of agrarianism, colonialism, capitalist competition, and environmental protection

as particularly influential in shaping the identities and experiences of both humans and nonhumans over the millennia.

In light of these themes, this book will highlight ancient Ireland prior to its incorporation into the modern world system, Ireland under British colonization, and modern Ireland in the era of intensified globalization. This analytical choice is discipline specific. Many sociologists, particularly those of the Marxist persuasion, look to a society's economy to understand its social structure. Material arrangements, believed to be largely unequal due to power imbalances, dictate social arrangements and these arrangements generally foster conflict. In other words, it makes sense to examine the material arrangements of a society in order to understand its ideologies and the life outcomes of those living therein. As this analysis surveys Ireland over the millennia, I will examine systems of "hunting," "herding," colonialism, and capitalism as the primary modes of production. Archaeological evidence supports the theory that early human societies prior to the system of "hunting" were primarily egalitarian and vegetarian (Mason 1993). As a more recently inhabited area of the globe, Ireland's human inhabitants always relied on some system of speciesism, but I will argue that this reliance was far less oppressive than it would come to be under the colonial system. Speciesist economic systems, reliant as they are on the exploitation of Nonhuman Animals, are inherently hierarchical and oppressive. Recall that vegan feminist theory argues that these systems entangle human and nonhuman oppression. Speciesist systems create a spatial arrangement that not only oppresses Nonhuman Animals, but that also fosters a logic and framework useful for the oppression of vulnerable humans such as women, children, lower classed persons, disabled persons, older persons, and so on. Speciesist systems are predicated on the extraction of maximum benefit for a few at the expense of the many. Such a system has ramifications for humans and nonhumans alike.

Critical Animal Studies

I have taken care to explain the intersectional nature of human-nonhuman experiences to prepare the reader for the book's thesis, but it is also necessary because the notion that Nonhuman Animals play a pivotal role in human society is a relatively new and sometimes contested concept. This is not unrelated to my opening premise that knowledge is a social (and thus political) construction. Social science, as with any science, also entails some

degree of bias. Nonhuman Animals are not excluded from inquiry due to their insignificance in social processes but due to the anthropocentrism of their researchers. *Critical Animal Studies* argues that a conscious application of intersectionality theory is necessary, bolstered by a strong, applied vegan ethic (Socha and Mitchell 2014).

Mainstream sociological and historical texts generally fail to extend this intersectionality praxis to include species. Susan Nance explores this disciplinary deficiency in *The Historical Animal* (2015), noting that the perspective of other animals is largely absent in official and cultural remembrance. Little record is kept, and what mention survives is invariably strained through the sieve of human supremacy. Vegan sociologists have emphasized the invisibility of Nonhuman Animals as a serious methodological failing, pointing to the validity of the nonhuman experience and the critical role they play in the human society that sociology prioritizes (Nibert 2003; Peggs 2012). My own research presented herein aims to combat this disciplinary resistance, offering evidence to the integral nature of human-nonhuman relations in the making, unmaking, and remaking of Irish society.

This book employs multiple complementary perspectives in pursuit of this goal, not only from sociology, but also from history, archaeology, feminism, and the interdisciplinary field of Critical Animal Studies. I make the somewhat provocative claim that the story of Irish humanity is more accurately conceived in the context of its relationship with Irish *animality*. Indeed, the boundary between “human” and “nonhuman” will itself be explored as a social construct. It is a derivative of human culture rather than the natural world, and it is made meaningful by its symbolic value. This boundary falsely classifies, categorizes, and reduces animal diversity. In this sense, it is a product of colonialism. Observes Ko, “*Animal* is a signifier that is always convenient and changing, and any group the dominant class deems unworthy is immediately branded with this label” (2019, 37). In examining the political manifestation of animality, we can better understand the mechanisms of colonialism and its impact on social relations and individual life chances.

Critical Animal Studies scholars are certainly not the first to identify these patterns. Once again, an Irish thinker can be credited for tackling this complexity early on. Literary satirist Jonathan Swift ([1726] 1900) famously explored modern boundary constructions in his eighteenth-century writings. Published in 1726, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World in Four Parts* (now colloquially known as *Gulliver’s Travels*) grappled with the rapidly changing social relations of modern life, notably the changing boundary

between humans and other animals, the violent divisions between social groups as they vied for power, and the ideological supports that both allowed for and explained widening social inequality. Some modern Irish thinkers, in other words, recognized that a transforming society was marked by its human and nonhuman inequalities and relations. Perhaps scholars today might take a cue from Gulliver and adopt an attitude of open-minded curiosity and adventure in the making of contemporary knowledge and meaning.

Swift may not have been vegetarian, but he clearly understood that the treatment of Nonhuman Animals was deeply connected to the treatment of marginalized humans, particularly those of colonial Ireland. As the protagonist of *Gulliver's Travels* discovers in his adventures to faraway cultures, the rationality and civility so frequently attributed to society's most privileged are characteristics that fall flat when institutions of domestication, slavery, and colonial oppression are examined. Humanity's distinction is undermined in places such as the Land of the Houyhnhnms, where horses, rather than humans, are found to be highly reasoned and virtuous. In this equine society, species constructions are reversed, and humans (known as "yahoos") are believed to be disgusting and irrational, suitable only for pet-keeping, draught, or butchery. The belief is so compelling that Gulliver begins to loathe his own humanity, allying with his equine hosts. As the metaphorical Land of Houyhnhnms demonstrates, the creation of animal difference brings order, logic, and hierarchy to humanity's social relations, but this separation is ultimately arbitrary. It is likely that Swift's own intimate relationships with Nonhuman Animals, particularly his horses, may have encouraged this critical examination of animality as a basis for social organization (A. C. Kelly 2007).

His work, contextualized within Britain's colonization of Ireland, submits that the boundaries constructed between humans and other animals and between culture and nature are fragile ones, but these are boundaries made necessary in the rationalization of inequality and oppression. Indeed, Marx recognized the divisive nature of class as instrumental in upholding capitalism. Without these divisions, exploited workers might recognize their shared oppression and revolt. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu ([1984] 2010) likewise observed this boundary-making in the maintenance of power relations in modern society. Examining this boundary work in the context of speciesism can only serve to elucidate the mechanics of social conflict. In any case, I find Swift's examination of inequality and animality in the Irish context to be a fruitful jumping off point for a larger analysis of Ireland in the colonial and postcolonial context. Since Swift's death, the entanglement

of human-nonhuman oppression would only grow more complex, adding urgency to the liberatory mission undertaken by vegan feminism, vegan studies, Critical Animal Studies, and Marxist sociology.

In the forthcoming pages, I introduce Nonhuman Animals to the discourse as legitimate social actors who are essential in the construction of the Irish state and its culture. This linkage is clearly evident in Ireland, but little has been published to illuminate it. Irish scholar Hilary Tovey (2003) is one of the few sociologists to question the wisdom of ignoring Nonhuman Animals in environmental and rural studies, given the role they play in “farmer” culture and identity as well as their ability to link rural and urban spaces. As she rightly identifies, sociology too often works in binaries by positioning human society against nature, and generally only recognizing communities of other animals in abstract environmental terms as “nature” or “biodiversity.” Doing so not only marginalizes domesticated species who resist such categories, but it also overlooks the regular and complex interconnections and interactions between humans and other animals. Nonhuman Animals are not always distant and removed. Instead, they are woven throughout social life. The socially constructed, economically driven conditions that shape human systems, such as industrialization and rationalization, directly impact nonhumans as well, but this, too, is overlooked by sociological inquiry. Tovey envisioned a new societal paradigm in which Nonhuman Animals, as a distinct group, would be granted proper acknowledgment and not simply be reduced to tools and symbols for human ends. If sociological theories of social construction, inequality, and change are to hold weight, they must extend to the nonhuman condition.

Methodology

It is no small task to accommodate these radical ambitions of Critical Animal Studies, which include a reimagining and rewriting of historical and contemporary social narratives (often on a grand scale with little existing work to guide the way). Like Swift’s Gulliver, I entered a great world of unknowns with a desire to explore uncharted territories and make sense of them with a critical lens focused on human-nonhuman relations. With so little place-specific research on which to base my species-inclusive Irish study, I found it necessary to undertake a rather haphazard approach to exploring the literature. I relied heavily on texts related to ancient, medieval, and modern Irish culture, farming, food, and environment, examining them for mention

of human interactions with other animals, both benevolent and oppressive. Some digital archives were searched, such as the Letters of 1916 repository and the Bureau of Military History database. I also targeted works related to the oppression of humans and Irish protest with an eye for potential intersections, such as the diary of hunger striker Bobby Sands, reports on Victorian-era asylums, and books on Irish feminist mobilization. For more current information, I followed the *Irish Times* and other Irish newspapers, also watching for mention of human-animal interactions or conflicts. Helpfully, the *Irish Times* allows for a keyword search of its archives, which allowed me to search for mention of veganism, vegetarianism, “animal rights,” and so on. I made use of the Vegan Society’s back issues of its publication the *Vegan* as well, which reached back to its founding in 1944. Although the Vegan Society is a British organization and made only sparing mention of vegan activities in the Republic, copious reports can be found on vegan activities in the north of Ireland. Publications by Britain’s Vegetarian Society archived online were likewise useful. Lastly, I did not hesitate to contact scholars and activists specializing in these areas for clues and suggestions, such as the aforementioned environmental sociologist Hilary Tovey. I otherwise relied heavily on publications in Critical Animal Studies to shape my analysis, looking for parallels that might be established in the Irish context.

As should be clear, my author positionality proved somewhat of a hindrance since, as of this writing, I am an American scholar based in Canterbury, England. Like many Americans, I can claim Irish heritage with my ancestors settling in Appalachia as part of the great wave of Scots-Irish immigration in the early eighteenth century. Also like many Americans, that Irish connection is distant and foreign. I lived in Cork for approximately a year and a half in the 2010s, but such a brief tenancy forces me to acknowledge that my familiarity with Irish culture and politics is still evolving and inherently vulnerable to misinterpretation. I inevitably run the risk of condensing and simplifying the great diversity of Irish societies, cultures, regions, and historical eras. Furthermore, as a practicing vegan, socialist, and feminist who is firmly positioned in the field of Critical Animal Studies, I cannot claim to have only a detached scholarly interest in these areas of Irish heritage. My sociological training also restricted my scope as to the relationships between humans and other animals—I generally avoid zoological examinations of the lives of other animals for instance.

There are additional methodological difficulties associated with my reliance on a historical record that normalizes speciesism and places little value on remembering Nonhuman Animals. The data that I have analyzed for this manuscript frequently objectified, belittled, or ignored the experi-

ences of other animals, leaving me to reinterpret and reconstruct the record from time to time. Adding to this is the inherent bias attached to the human researcher, a bias that can easily inhibit said interpretation of the data. Therefore, the aim of this book is not to create an objective report, as any scientific endeavor entails some degree of professional spin. Nor will it presume to know the true, subjective experience of those nonhumans referenced herein. It can only offer a critical sociological perspective on the Irish nonhuman experience with the intention of lending legitimacy to the reality of society's most vulnerable, those who rarely warrant mention in the tomes of scientific and cultural dialogue. The intention is not to write *on behalf of* these individuals, for they were not and are not voiceless objects without agency. This book instead writes in their support.

Some other stylistic decisions warrant mention. "Ireland" will be used in reference to either Ireland the republic or Ireland the united colony where appropriate and unless otherwise indicated. With respect to the years following Partition, this book will focus primarily on Southern Ireland, although it will sometimes be fruitful to explore themes of economics, activism, and Irish Republicanism in the North. Neither do I intend to compress the diversity *within* these spaces, north or south, past or present, although some degree of generalization has been necessary, as I have intended this book to be an introductory glance at human-nonhuman relations in a region heretofore almost completely ignored by Critical Animal Studies scholars. Colonized people are not a homogenous group and obviously there will be significant diversity with regard to species, class, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, and so on.

Lastly, a note on language is pertinent. Sociology recognizes the symbolic power of language in normalizing attitudes and shaping culture. Sometimes this social function can be problematic, when that language helps to solidify inequality. Therefore, those terms and phrases that euphemize oppression (such as "meat" or "farming") are placed within quotation marks to denote their problematic nature, while objectifying mass terms, notably "sheep," "mice," and "fish" are modified. Finally, the term "Nonhuman Animals" is capitalized as a political measure of respect for the nonhuman diaspora in a human supremacist society. The popular, but otherizing term "animals" is avoided for similar reasons.

Conclusion

Although Nonhuman Animals have played a pivotal role in the development of Irish culture and nationhood, they have been largely erased from critical

inquiries. Likewise, the experiences of Nonhuman Animals as they matter to nonhumans themselves are almost completely overlooked. Theories of intersectionality stemming from Black feminism emphasize that experiential analyses will be considerably lacking if deployed in singular dimensions. Instead, various identities often intersect at once. In the case of Ireland, identities based in species, gender, class, and colonialism have interlocked in support of a matrix of oppression, entwining the destinies of humans and other animals alike. Unfortunately, leading social science theory fails to extend this intersectional theory to the experience of Nonhuman Animals, but Critical Animal Studies has emerged to legitimize the study of speciesism and the liberatory promise of veganism.

Nonhuman Animals, if taken seriously as social actors in their own right, are well positioned to offer critical insight into the Irish experience. As such, this book examines the parallel narratives of oppression and resistance, arguing that a vegan feminist perspective holds potential in illuminating shared oppressions in colonial and postcolonial Ireland and envisioning a more equitable Irish future. I suggest that this can be accomplished by resurrecting a Gaelic vegan ethic that has been subsumed and adulterated by various oppressive economic systems and by constructing a new vegan ethic that incorporates egalitarian elements of Ireland's past with new developments in twentieth- and twenty-first-century Irish culture and economy.

This economic focus will also be examined from a Marxist perspective. Like vegan feminism, vegan socialist theory acknowledges the social constructedness of social difference and its political utility in sustaining unequal social relations. It further acknowledges that speciesism is a fundamental source of division as it undergirds most economic modes of production. The next chapter examines human relationships with other animals as they transfigure under various economies such as "hunting," "cattle" raiding, and stationary animal-based agriculture. Speciesist economies, I will document, dramatically influenced the trajectory of Nonhuman Animals, humans, and Ireland itself.