THE ONTARIO LANGUAGE, SOCIAL STUDIES, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CURRICULUM AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN AND NONHUMAN ANIMALS: A COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the dynamics of human-animal relationships within Ontario's language, social studies, and environmental curricula. Using a qualitative approach, this collaborative action research (CAR) case study involves interviews with students and teachers who recount personal experiences with animals, inside and outside of the classroom, comment on pedagogy related to the treatment of animals, and attempt to create animal-centred lessons. Drawing from my background as an educator and animal enthusiast, this analysis is informed by a critical discourse analysis of both policy documents and case study interview data. The primary objective of the research was to identify effective pedagogical strategies that promote an intrinsic appreciation for nonhuman life.

To support my research agenda, I use two primary conceptual frameworks—critical animal studies (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2018; Nibert, 2014; Nocella, 2011; Taylor & Twine, 2014) and an engaged policy and practices perspective (Davis, 2014; Davis & Phyak, 2017; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Schecter et al., 2014)—and critical discourse analysis as an analytic tool. The findings reveal differing degrees of consciousness and moral responsibility towards animal welfare and highlight the need to revise educational policies and approaches. Citizenship education is identified as a portal through which the development of a higher moral consciousness with regard to the appreciation of nonhuman animals can be fostered. As well, policy revisions should be implemented within the Ontario curriculum and teacher training programs to ensure that educators possess the knowledge and skills to effectively teach the importance of nonhuman animal life.

Dedication

For Louie

2015–2024

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Sandra Schecter, for supporting me and my research. Your insight and guidance were invaluable, and I am honoured to have worked and learned alongside you. I would also like to give thanks to my supervisory committee, Dr. Atsuko Matsuoka and Dr. Steve Alsop. Your expertise, experience, and patience have significantly contributed to my growth and I am grateful for your willingness to be part of my journey.

I wish to express gratitude to the respondents in this study—your honesty and eagerness to create and learn together made this project more meaningful than I ever could have imagined.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I situate this work somewhere between the magic of language, the dire need to value the lives of nonhuman animals, and the power of education. My enthusiasm for the use of language, especially within education, was ignited by the influence both curriculum and pedagogy have in student learning and understanding, and how those effects translate into shaping students into productive citizens. The interconnectedness of this relationship inspired me to reflect on my own education and consider how it had shaped me, my research interests, and my thinking.

In the winter term of the first year of my doctoral degree program, I stumbled upon a course in the Faculty of Social Work that had the words *animals* and *social justice* in the title. Unsure of what to expect, I hoped the course would allow me to explore some way to actively support animals and their rights in the physical world. It was during this course that I realized the bias of curriculum my education had exposed me to and the way the language used when topics related to animals were brought up had blinded my true interests and passions. However, I also discovered that the presence of a new kind of discourse and associated curriculum was a possible remedy. This discourse is situated within two conceptual frameworks—critical animal studies (CAS) and engaged policy and practices (EPP).

I embed my dissertation study within a collaborative action research (CAR) initiative that employs a qualitative approach, within a two-phase design. Phase 1 includes a critical assessment of the problem, addressing the discursive orientation of the Ontario curriculum towards the valuing and treatment of nonhuman animals. In particular, I focus on the lack of appropriate attention given to these important themes in the province's language, literacy, social studies and environmental education curriculum documents. The second component addresses

the process and findings of my empirical research consisting of life-history interviews and a curriculum design exercise—both embedded within a collaborative action research initiative with practising teachers and students. For this work, methodologically I privilege van Dijk's (2001) understanding of power and dominance through discourse and analyze the exertion of social power through language. I also used Martin Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology to decipher the language used in discussions of relevant themes through a suspension of assumptions, "stripping back layers of perception" (Goulding, 2004, p. 1).

Research Questions

In this dissertation, I elucidate the types of speciesist practices that perpetuate a hierarchical relationship between nonhuman animals and humans that are rationalized and reproduced through various Ontario social studies curriculum expectations. I also probe the emic reality of students' and teachers' attitudes towards these issues and explore possibilities for constructive intervention. I use the following three questions as heuristics to explore my research agenda:

- How does the discursive content of the Ontario language, social studies, and environmental education curriculum orient students' perceptions of nonhuman animals and their relations with humans?
- How can critical animal studies serve as a tool to disentangle anthropocentric pedagogies, thus helping students question and actively engage with issues so that they can explore their citizenship responsibilities in relation to nonhuman animals?
- What pedagogic approaches have potential for providing a more enlightened perspective on understanding and valuing nonhuman animals?

The Problem: Formal Education and the Valuing and Treatment of Nonhuman Animals

Education today is faced with increased uncertainty as resources become scarce, exacerbating "pre-existing education disparities by reducing opportunities for many of the most vulnerable children, youth, and adults" (United Nations, 2020). This project addresses the issue of how "anthroparchy" is promoted within education and investigates how educators can best prepare their students to face an increasingly unstable world.

The primary problem I address in this study is the inadequate way that nonhuman animal life is engaged by contemporary education systems. The research is situated in postpandemic Canada, where single-use plastics have been newly banned and climate change is among the issues of greatest concern (Vitello, 2020). The formal education system, however, has lagged behind movements that address these crucial concerns. Even though Ontario, the province of focus for this project, has a curriculum that purports to promote environmentalism, this curriculum fails to value nonhuman animal life and to underscore the interconnectedness of this key issue with other environmental issues.

This project proceeds from an understanding that schools are mandated to teach from a curriculum created to further political agendas which are converted into practice by educators. Rather than reform coming from the top down, we seek to show the potential for reform by beginning at the bottom—with teachers and their classrooms. At the same time, we are aware that without mandatory or even elective courses on nonhuman animals offered to teachers in training in most universities across Canada, the desire to create curriculum connections must be fostered from sources external to the formal education system.

Sorenson (2011) observes, "Questions about our relationships with nonhuman animals and how we should treat them are among the oldest of philosophical debates but lately have

re-emerged to become some of the most critical ethical questions of the twenty-first century" (p. 219). The entanglement between our planet, humans, and nonhuman animals, especially during the disruption of the ongoing global pandemic, should by now have propelled this philosophical debate to the forefront of education. However, publicly funded schools—institutions of the economic infrastructure—hegemonize learning by mandating a speciesist curriculum from kindergarten through Grade 12. To inspire change and eliminate hierarchical systems of domination over both human and nonhuman animals would disrupt capitalism's dependency on exploitation. Exploitation ensures a financial—and therefore also a power—disparity between those ranking at the top of social hierarchies and those at the bottom. Schools normalize this pattern of oppression and domination through anthropocentric reasoning, and thus deny students the opportunity to grapple with the value and importance of our relations with oppressed bodies, especially those of nonhuman animals.

Students absorb and adopt this embedded rationalization of anthropocentric logic through the institution of schooling. Geerdts et al. (2015), citing Hermann et al. (2010), assert, "Neither younger urban nor younger rural children reason anthropocentrically" (p. 133). However, the research indicates that "around the age of 5 years, urban and rural children's reasoning patterns diverge, with only urban children beginning to show anthropocentrism (Waxman & Medin, 2007)" (Geerdts et al., 2015, p. 133). This evolution of stance may be attributed to the fact that urban children "may have more extensive experience with fictional depictions of animals than with real animals, and these experiences may cause them to reason anthropocentrically (Waxman & Medin, 2007)" (Geerdts et al., 2015, p. 133).

Children are exposed to fictional depictions of nonhuman animals through media, song, literature, and education. From these influences, they derive their understanding of "culturally

appropriate relationships" (Cole & Stewart, 2018, p. 94). These cultural messages are "transmitted in childhood in many subtle, insidious, and powerful ways, which extend to almost every corner of children's experience" (Cole & Stewart, 2018, p. 94). Matsuoka and Sorenson (2018), citing Cudworth (2011), assert that the messages, across all platforms, are anthroparchal: that is, they reproduce "a social system, a complex and relatively stable set of hierarchical relationships in which 'nature' is dominated through formations of social organization which privilege the human over members of all other species" (p. 94). The authors also emphasize that the concept of anthroparchy "captures the ways in which those hierarchical relationships intersect with intrahuman hierarchies, such that inequalities of gender, 'race,' ethnicity, age, class, sexuality, and so on are bound up with this domination of nature" (p. 94). In this manner, anthropocentric reasoning is taught and normalized as culturally appropriate.

Given the exorbitant amount of time children in Ontario spend within schools, this study devotes considerable attention to the anthroparchal messages conveyed through mandated learning materials. This said, although a total revision of the curriculum and a restructuring of teacher education may well be the most effective route for ideological transformation, this study elects to illuminate pockets of agency that teachers and students can access to interrogate and change their orientations towards the importance of valuing nonhuman animal life.

Nonhuman Animal Life within the Ontario Curriculum: A Null Factor

This research elucidates the relationship between the integration of nonhuman animals into the curriculum and teachers' pedagogical strategies, alongside the commodification of nonhuman animals amidst growing concerns about global warming. I begin my discussion of the problem by pointing out that in all viable areas of the formal curriculum where issues relevant to the valuing and treatment of nonhuman animals could be privileged or even addressed, there

exists a startling absence of focus. For example, in 2017 Ontario's education system introduced the environmental education curriculum to tackle issues of pollution and global warming (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017a, 2017b). However, Ontario's K–12 curriculum currently fails to illustrate the link between our warming planet and the marginalization of nonhuman animals, nor does it anticipate the diverse benefits of recognizing the value of nonhuman animal life.

The environmental education curriculum document highlights the already-embedded expectations across all grades and subjects "that relate directly to environmental education as well as expectations that encompass opportunities for learning about the environment" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017b, p. 3). The framework of this document "emphasizes the necessity of ensuring that young people become environmentally active and responsible citizens" (p. 2). To ensure that students are able to strategize and implement solutions to the preexisting issues with the current and—even more, the future—state of our planet, the policy framework aims to develop skills in "problem solving, inquiry, decision making, action planning, higher-level thinking, systems thinking, and critical literacy" (p. 3). The philosophy found in the environmental education curriculum is echoed in the *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow* document (Government of Ontario, 2009), a policy that works in tandem with *Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future* (Government of Ontario, Working Group on Environmental Education, 2007). However, in *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow*, it is acknowledged that "there is no universal model for the implementation of environmental education" (Government of Ontario, 2009, p. 4).

All three of these documents are interconnected. The first, *Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future* (Government of Ontario, Working Group on Environmental Education, 2007), begins

with Ontario's education reform and introduces the concept of environmental education as part of the province's vision for providing its future citizens with the best education possible (p. 1). The second document, *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow* (Government of Ontario, 2009), outlines the policy framework for implementing environmental education in all schools across Ontario and aims to provide all graduating students with "knowledge, skills, and perspectives that foster understanding of their fundamental connections to each other, to the world around them, and to all living things" (p. 11). The third, the two-volume *Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017a, 2017b), is a culmination of the two in the form of a curriculum document, outlining all learning expectations by grade and by subject.

The policy framework outlined in *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow* (Government of Ontario, 2009) seeks to disrupt, through activism, the normalized practices and habits, "rooted in personal and social values and in organizational structures" (p. 4), that are detrimental to our planet. The implementation of this policy framework is centred around three goals, each of which is organized under a particular theme. The first goal, under the theme of teaching and learning, promotes "learning about environmental issues and solutions" (p. 8). It reads, "By the end of Grade 12, students will acquire knowledge, skills, and perspectives that foster understanding of their fundamental connections to each other, to the world around them, and to all living things" (p. 11). Related to this goal, two strategies are listed in this section. The first is to "increase student knowledge and develop skills and perspectives that foster environmental stewardship" (p. 12). The plan stipulates that schools will meet this goal by giving students the opportunity to work on action-based projects: "(e.g., loss of biodiversity, climate change, waste reduction, energy conservation)" (p. 12). The second strategy aims to "model and teach

environmental education through an integrated approach that promotes collaboration in the development of resources and activities." (p. 13). The Ministry of Education has declared its intention to increase the amount of resources accessible to teachers that focus on green technologies and innovative practices (p. 13). These additional resources will, in turn, allow schools to "develop learning opportunities that will help students understand the underlying causes, the multiple dimensions, and the dynamic nature of environmental issues" (p. 14).

The second goal, under the theme of student engagement and community connection, "engages students to participate actively in practising and promoting environmental stewardship, both in the school and in the community" (Government of Ontario, 2009, p. 8). It reads, "Increase student engagement by fostering active participation in environmental projects and building links between schools and communities." (p. 14). As with the first goal, two strategies are listed in this section. The first is to "build student capacity to take action on environmental issues" (p. 15). To address this goal, schools will encourage students to engage in environmental issues at every grade level and, specifically, encourage action research on this area (p. 15). The second strategy reads, "Provide leadership support to enhance student engagement and community involvement" (p. 16). Here the schools are meant to work with the community to promote awareness of different issues and to develop robust learning opportunities outside of the classroom (p. 17).

The third goal, under the theme of environmental leadership, "stresses the importance of providing leadership by implementing and promoting responsible environmental practices throughout the education system so that staff, parents, community members, and students become dedicated to living more sustainably" (Government of Ontario, 2009, p. 8). It reads, "Increase the capacity of system leaders to implement evidence-based environmental education

programming, practices, and operations" (p. 18). There are, again, two strategies listed in this section. The first is to "increase the extent to which environmental education is integrated into school board policies, procedures, and strategic plans" (p. 19). Here the school administration plans to rely on the preexisting knowledge of teachers, staff, and community members to foster cognitive development. The second strategy aims to "enhance the integration of environmentally responsible practices into the management of resources, operations, and facilities" (p. 20). Again, the schools will provide opportunities for teacher learning and collaboration on ways to promote environmentally conscious pedagogies, and sustainable habits and practices for everyday living.

In addition, the environmental education curriculum directly supports the initiatives of the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit education policy framework. An overarching goal of this policy framework states that all students "will have the knowledge and appreciation of contemporary and First Nation, Métis, and Inuit traditions, cultures, and perspectives" (Ontario Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Education Office, 2007, p. 7). This goal alludes to the knowledge the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit have about the land and their practices and beliefs on taking care of the land. To further highlight the complementary aims of the two policy frameworks, *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow* (Government of Ontario, 2009) expects students to "become mindful of perspectives other than their own and be prepared to modify their ideas and beliefs when appropriate (e.g., understand and respect First Nation, Métis, and Inuit concepts of knowledge)" (p. 27).

Without question the orientation of the overall K–12 curriculum in Ontario has evolved to value diverse forms of knowledge, include different perspectives, and cultivate a critical stance with regard to our role in taking care of our planet. However, there are important lacunae in the current curriculum. The curriculum does not anticipate the themes I am exploring in this

research, nor the holistic perspective I believe is necessary to ensure that students have the "knowledge, skills, and perspectives that foster understanding of their fundamental connections to each other, to the world around them, and to all living things" (Government of Ontario, 2009, p. 11). Without consideration for the role that consuming and commodifying nonhuman animals play in harming the environment, students are unable to tackle the largest contributor to global warming and have a very limited and skewed understanding of how to exact agency in this area. In this study, I argue that this gaping hole in the curriculum is directly connected to the neoliberal capitalist economy and associated direct financial gain from the commodification of nonhuman animals. Thus, the policy framework for the environmental education curriculum in Ontario cannot dismantle the systematic teaching of speciesist principles that are the "underlying causes of environmental stresses" (Government of Ontario, 2009, p. 4), ingrained in society and its institutions—particularly education, a system that benefits directly from those stresses.

Representing Human-Animal Relations in K–12 Classrooms

In this section, I analyze the discourse within some of Ontario's educational policies and examine how nonhuman animals are represented, specifically focusing on their inclusion in the social studies (and geography for Grades 7 and 8), environmental education, and citizenship education curricula. I explore how education can perpetuate the subordination of nonhuman animal life. Additionally, I address the intersection of citizenship education with the broader agenda of this project. A particular emphasis is placed on Grades 6 through 8 because both of the teacher participants and both student participants represent these cohorts.

Expectations and Guiding Principles in Ontario's Social Studies Curriculum Document. The Ontario social studies curriculum for Grades 1–6 claims to recognize that "students need to be critically literate in order to synthesize information, make informed

decisions, communicate effectively, and thrive in an ever-changing global community" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 3). In Grades 7 and 8, social studies are separated into history and geography. The social studies document acknowledges the importance of being able to apply the knowledge gained "to the world at large" (p. 3). It is also important to note that this document "shares a common vision with the Grade 9 to 12 Canadian and world studies curriculum" (p. 6):

> The social studies, history, geography, and Canadian and world studies programs will enable students to become responsible, active citizens within the diverse communities to which they belong. As well as becoming critically thoughtful and informed citizens who value an inclusive society, students will have the skills they need to solve problems and communicate ideas and decisions about significant developments, events, and issues. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 6)

Social studies taught in Grades 1–6, then, are the foundational building blocks for secondary students' engagement with Canadian and world studies.

The mandated learning expectations for social studies, from Grade 1 to Grade 6, are organized in two strands: (a) Heritage and Identity and (b) People and Environments. For the purpose of this study, I focus on the latter strand. The People and Environments strand articulates a focus on "natural and built environments and the connections between the two" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 22) by having students explore "geographic, social, political, economic, and environmental issues in the context of local, regional, national, and global communities, [so] they develop an understanding of the social and environmental responsibilities of citizens and of various levels of government" (p. 22). However, throughout the specific

grade-level curriculum expectations, students are asked to consider only the ways in which animals are used to benefit the lives of humans. For example, in Grade 2 students are required to

> identify basic human needs (e.g., for food, water, clothing, transportation, shelter), and describe some ways in which people in communities around the world meet these needs (e.g., food: hunting, fishing, farming, shopping at grocery stores; transportation: on foot, using animals, using motorized vehicles, by water). (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 83)

Again, in Grade 4, students are asked to "describe significant aspects of daily life in a few early societies, including at least one First Nation and one Inuit society" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 103). Supporting this expectation are sample questions that guide educators' instruction. The sample question for this specific expectation reads, "Why were animals important to these modes of transportation?" (p. 103). In this manner, the provincial curriculum document is peppered with topics that bring nonhuman animals into the conversation; however, contextually, these beings are referenced and described as objects that derive their worth from their role in relation to human betterment.

A similar discourse on the use and value of nonhuman animals appears in the Grade 7 and 8 geography curriculum document (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2023). Here, the word *animal* only appears twice, both within Grade 7 specific expectations, B2.6 and B3.2 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2023, pp. 307, 308). Both specific expectations are located within strand B, titled "Natural Resources Around the World: Use and Sustainability" (p. 304). The first specific expectation, B2.6, asks that students "communicate the results of their inquiries using appropriate vocabulary" (p. 307), and part of the prompt states, "*a fictionalized narrative about a person or animal affected by a natural resource extraction processes*" (p. 307). The second,

B3.2, asks that students be able to "describe ways in which people use the natural environment, including specific elements within it, to meet their needs and wants" (p. 308). The prompt for this specific expectation reads, "*animals are used for food, clothing, recreation*" (p. 308). In the first expectation, students are asked to consider animals only within a hypothetical scenario, and the second labels them as objects for human use. Further, the omission of nonhuman animal life in relation to sustainability suggests that we must learn to live in a way that is only beneficial for our own survival. This is even more evident when we consider that only overall expectations are mandated, not specific ones, and nonhuman animal life does not appear among them.

The above expectations reveal the anthroparchal messages embedded within the curriculum. The subordination of nonhuman animals and the reductionist view of their value as commodities shape the kinds of exploitative relationships we are likely to develop and maintain with nonhuman animals. Pedersen (2019) criticizes formal education for being an institution of speciesism that not only enables but requires "the sacrifice (or subordination or killing) of the animal in order for the human to achieve his full potential" (p. 8). Pedersen further calls for a "cessation of relating to animals through our narcissistic preoccupation with animals-for-us" (p. 11). Oakley (2009) argues that until the hidden speciesist values embedded within the curriculum are acknowledged and removed, students will continue to internalize practices, attitudes, values, and beliefs that subordinate nonhuman animals (p. 61).

Environmental Education Initiatives. In Ontario, according to *Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future*, environmental education seeks "to promote an appreciation and understanding of, and concern for, the environment, and to foster informed, engaged, and responsible environmental citizenship" (Government of Ontario, Working Group on Environmental Education, 2007, p. 6). The document stipulates that to be effective,

environmental education must incorporate "problem solving, hands-on learning, action projects, scientific inquiry, higher order thinking, and cooperative learning … environmental literacy … [and] sustainability" (p. 6). Further, effective environmental education "is the responsibility of the entire education community" (p. 10), the responsibility of educators across all grades and disciplines. For the purposes of this study, I focus on the environmental education initiatives directly related to the Grades 6 and 8 language curricula, the Grade 6 social studies curriculum, and the Grade 8 geography curriculum.

Environmental Education and Cross-Curricular Concerns. The Ontario environmental education curriculum is premised on the potential for overlap with the language teaching agenda. In Grade 6, "the learning context (e.g., a topic or thematic unit related to the environment) and/or learning materials (e.g., books, websites, media) could be used to foster in students the development of environmental understanding … [and] provide opportunities for exploring environmental education" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017a, p. 80). Here, the document suggests reading texts "*by Native authors*" (p. 81), or choosing "learning contexts" (p 80) to "foster the development of environmental understanding" (p. 80). Moreover, the environmental education curriculum also indicates that there is an overlap between social studies and environmental education expectations. The document recommends that students "develop plans of action aimed at promoting stewardship" (p. 5) in order to incorporate environmental education initiatives within social studies program planning. Although in Grades 6 and 8 language there is no specific or overall connection that explicitly addresses environmental education, the document does suggest the potential for an environmental connection through critical literacy; however, it is not mandated (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017a, pp. 80, 106).

The environmental education curriculum document (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017a, 2017b) does not consider the value of nonhuman animal life even insofar as it is connected to climate change. Notably, the document fails to connect the impact of mass farming with global environmental concerns and, as such, nonhuman animals are excluded from the language of the expectations. Again, the anthroparchal message delivered through the curriculum maintains that nonhuman animals are subordinate to humans.

Citizenship Education and the Ontario Curriculum. In shaping the framework for my analysis of curriculum documents, I was drawn to explore citizenship education as a promising avenue for the activist research component of my study. Realizing the potential to embed and ignite an action research project within this domain, I sought to delve into an area that both educators and students would readily recognize as integral to the curriculum. I hoped this approach would connect directly with pro-animal activism—especially through the social-justice tier—and foster a way to deepen human-animal relationships in which nonhuman animals are inherently valued. As I elucidate in my findings chapters, despite these initial expectations it became evident that the issues I privilege in my thesis do not currently have a place in the formal citizenship education agenda. Nevertheless, as I explain later in my discussion of my findings, because of the analysis uncovered through critical discourse analysis, I believe citizenship education holds significant potential as a vehicle for ushering in the transformative changes I envision. Hence I devote some attention to this venue in my elucidation of the problem.

In elementary grades, citizenship education is introduced through the social studies curriculum and the health and physical education curriculum in Grades 1–6. The framework for citizenship education, reproduced in Appendix A, is divided into four sections: structures, active participation, attributes, and identity (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 10). The section

on structures is interested in advocating for the development of understanding power dynamics and systems of power within and among societies; the section on active participation broadly advocates for the critical exploration of "controversial issues"; the section on attributes aims to develop "attitudes that foster civic engagement", such as self-respect, empathy for others, and inclusiveness; and the section on identity looks to help solidify students' sense of "connectedness to local, national, and global communities" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 10). Relevant to this study, the social studies curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018) aligns with a citizenship education orientation by seeking to ensure that all curriculum expectations "enhance opportunities for citizenship education" (p. 7).

Citizenship Education Research. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) propose a citizenship education framework that considers how "various perspectives on citizenship also have significantly varying implications for curriculum" (p. 238). They argue that all democratic education programs "call attention to the spectrum of ideas about what good citizenship *is* and what good citizens *do*" (p. 237); however, those with power to influence the curriculum, "educators, policymakers, politicians, and community activists," all pursue different self-interested "agendas for change" under the banner of democracy (p. 237).

The authors' framework outlines three embodiments of citizenship: the personally responsible citizen, the participatory citizen, and the justice-oriented citizen (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004, p. 239). The personally responsible citizen perspective is a prototypically conservative vision of citizenship which emphasizes "problems in society caused by personal deficits" (p. 239). The personally responsible citizen perspective is a form of citizenship education that seeks to build student character and develop a sense of personal responsibility (p. 241) by asking students to participate in community initiatives like giving food, clothing, or

blood or adopting a pet. The objective in the participatory citizen approach is to educate students on the ways government and community-based organizations work and train people to be able to plan and participate in their own initiatives (p. 242). Here, relationships, collective commitment, and common understandings with diverse groups are highlighted. Finally, the "least commonly pursued" program, the justice-oriented citizen, argues that students require opportunities to "analyze and understand the interplay of social, economic, and political forces" (p. 242). These opportunities, in turn, direct students to change society, on a global scale, to be more equitable and just. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) compare the three visions with a situational example: "If participatory citizens are organizing the food drive and personally responsible citizens are donating food, justice-oriented citizens are asking why people are hungry and acting on what they discover" (p. 242).

Banks (2014), citing Parker (2002), also found that mainstream citizenship education, equivalent to Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) personally responsible citizen perspective, is the most commonly implemented framework across social studies classrooms in the United States. Banks found that this type of education fails to "challenge or disrupt the class, racial, or gender discrimination in the schools and society" and thereby "reinforces the status quo and the dominant power relationships in society" (p. 7).

The values embedded within the citizenship education framework in Ontario's social studies curriculum parallel Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) personally responsible citizen perspective. The curriculum takes up nonhuman animals in a context where they are viewed as expendable commodities from the perspective of capital, consumption, and even transportation. The commodification of nonhuman animals, as Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) and Banks's (2014) findings suggest, furthers oppressive hierarchical relationships within society that are

ultimately fuelled and funded by a neoliberal capitalist agenda, leaving no room in the curriculum to explore the value and interconnectedness of nonhuman life.

While the social studies curriculum considers the environment and our treatment of the planet, this concern only goes as far as what humans can do to slow down the rate of destruction to maintain the same style of living. Initiatives such as *recycle more* or *use less water* are often presented as ways society at large can make a difference. The narrative does not address how animal agriculture and the mass production of meat and meat byproducts for our consumption remain one of the largest factors contributing to global climate change (Blattner, 2020, p. 54; Nordgren, 2012). Rather than make changes to a normalized way of life, the social studies curriculum in Ontario engages students in a personally responsible citizen vision of education that emphasizes responsibility for mitigating the deleterious effects of climate change, treated as an "over there" problem; overall, "the poor will suffer the bulk of the damages from climate change" (Mendelsohn et al., 2006, p. 173).

Following Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) framework, a justice-oriented citizen vision of citizenship education would also address the attitudes, dispositions, and perspectives needed to tackle speciesist notions embedded within the education system and society at large. However, within this construction, a justice-oriented vision perspective calls only for critical assessment but not for activism. Through a critical animal studies lens, I argue that good citizenship must entail activist-based work to the end of all oppressed and dominated groups being treated equitably.

Research Goals

Although the amount of research at the intersection of CAS and education is increasing, to date there has been scant recent classroom-based research on the benefits of using CAS to

foster relationships between human and nonhuman animals in K–12. This study makes a theoretical contribution to CAS by enriching the understanding of how education, as an agent of socialization of children, instantiates the conception of nonhuman animals as objects that are to be consumed and exploited. Further, my research will fill a crucial gap in citizenship education scholarship by promoting reconsiderations of the primary and secondary-level curricula as they relate to the treatment of nonhuman animals, thereby fostering human implication in planet sustainability. Finally, my exploration seeks to establish a link with another crucial emergent area of study that could be integrated into every subject matter of the curriculum, climate change, by fostering oppressionless relations with nonhuman animals that can be used to bring about environmental sustainability.

Researcher's Positionality

This study originates from my longstanding interests as a student in studying language acquisition and in the questions I have developed as an educator. I approached this study from my intersectionality as a graduate student researcher, a teacher, and an animal rights activist. This personal embodiment may have influenced me to overestimate the negative ramifications of particular language usages with regard to the adaptive odysseys of participants' relationships with nonhuman animals, a theme I return to in my final chapter. As well, as a professional who has not been involved at an infrastructural policy level in the development of curriculum, I may not be fully sensitized to the compromises that educators engaged in curriculum design need to negotiate in seeking to reconcile multiple divergent interests.

My fascination with curriculum reform as a medium for ideological transformation was fuelled first and foremost by my decision to begin eating as a lactovegetarian at the age of 13. After this decision, I was inundated inside and outside of school with constant grimaces and

misinformed remarks about the importance of consuming protein in the form of animal bodies. My requests to opt out of mandatory dissections in science class and for vegetarian options in the cafeteria were met with laughs and lectures about "the natural order of life"—a system that, in my view, legitimized humans' dominion over animal bodies, habitats, and lives. This system was reinforced throughout all of my classes but overlooked only when topics related to animal life in the form of pets were discussed. The notion of consuming dog meat or slaughtering a cat for its fur was almost universally understood to entail cruelty and wrongdoing. Here is when I began to notice the discrepancies in the ways human animals treat and think and speak about nonhuman animals. The discrepancies, coupled with my academic foundation in English literature, sociolinguistics, education, and critical animal studies, have made me hyperaware of the influence and possibility both education and educators hold. Finally, the more I learn about the inextricable relationships between language, power, and the neoliberal capitalist economy, the more I am compelled to advocate for defenceless beings who are forced to accept an ever-dwindling share of an environment over which they have no control.

It is also important to note that, to date, I have worked on a part-time, contractual basis as a lecturer within the education faculties at different universities. Most recently, I have been hired to teach a course on environmental philosophies for students working towards their master of education degree at a northern Ontario university. As my work within the field and research continue to grow, so does my understanding of the multifaceted landscape of education and the importance of environmental education. I remain committed to contributing meaningfully to the advancement of knowledge in the field of education while remaining grounded in the realities of educational practice.

Dissertation Outline

In Chapter 2 I elaborate the conceptual frameworks that serve as guiding principles for this dissertation study. My research is informed by theory in critical animal studies (CAS) and principles that emanate from research in engaged policy and practices (EPP). My literature review, in Chapter 3, reports on studies that review communication patterns in nonhuman animals, the commodification of nonhuman animal bodies, educational policies and the ways in which nonhuman animals are represented within those policies, the influential role of children's literature in shaping young minds, and Indigenous knowledges. In Chapter 4, I describe the methodological and analytical approaches I used in this two-part study in initiating a critical analysis of Ontario curriculum documents and a collaborative action research (CAR) study involving teacher and student participants. In Chapters 5 and 6, I report on the findings from the data collected in the empirical portions of the study, categorizing the discourses identified and comparing teacher and student perspectives in relation to these discourses. In Chapter 5, I report on rationales provided by teacher and student participants to explain their stances on issues that are critical to the agenda of this study. In Chapter 6, I organize these rationales into a framework revealing distinct stances and orientations, or "discourses," towards the valuing and treatment of nonhuman animals. In the final chapter, Chapter 7, I address specifically my second and third research questions, interpreting my findings from the empirical research portions of my study in terms of future directions for research and action. I conclude this chapter by outlining the theoretical implications of my research, specifying applied imperatives, and suggesting potential areas for future research in the area.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Frameworks

My dissertation study is embedded within two conceptual frameworks: critical animal studies (CAS) and engaged policy and practices (EPP). In this chapter, I provide a description of these theoretical foundations and explain their relevance to my research. Together, these frameworks work to reenvision an approach to policy and practices related to the treatment of nonhuman animals through an equity and social justice perspective.

Critical Animal Studies

Critical animal studies, "rooted in critical theory and the Frankfurt School" (Nocella, 2011, p. 100), is considered an "interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary intersectional and multi-movement approach to the advocacy for total animal liberation" (p. 100). A progressive social justice ideology (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2018, citing Nocella et al., 2014, p. xxxi), a CAS perspective argues

> for the solidarity and alliance of human activists and academics with nonhumans for total liberation and an end to all oppression, domination and authoritarianism, not only in a theoretical way by simply writing about alliance politics but also by directly organizing and participating in other movements beyond nonhuman animal liberation. (p. 120)

Following Nibert (2014), CAS is a framework that "promotes scholarly examination of entangled oppression of humans and other animals; places this investigation in the context of historical and social structural forces; recognizes the role of capitalism in promoting system oppression of all types; and proposes strategies for purposeful action" (p. xi). The term *critical animal studies* "emerged out of a great deal of dialogue by many animal rights/liberation academics and activists around the world in 2006 and 2007 [and was] facilitated by Anthony J. Nocella, II, Steve Best, Richard Kahn … and John Sorenson" (Nocella, 2011, p. 100, citing

Institute for Critical Animal Studies, n.d.). The framework is overtly political and "calls for conceptual renewal, methodological innovation, theory that is relevant and engaged and, in line with many cognate influences on the academy such as feminism and environmentalism, a further softening of disciplinary boundaries" (Taylor & Twine, 2014, p. 4). In practice, it "attempts to rupture normative understandings of academia itself, as well as having specific disciplinary critiques and … wishes to stoke civil society into working toward progressive social change" (Taylor & Twine, 2014, p. 4).

Those involved in the coining of the concept and development of the field include theorists such as Steven Best, Richard Kahn, Carol Gigliotti, Lisa Kemmerer, and Anthony Nocella (Nocella, 2011, p. 102). They developed Ten Principles of Critical Animal Studies. Best et al. (2007) expressed these principles as follows:

1. Pursues interdisciplinary collaborative writing and research in a rich and comprehensive manner that includes perspectives typically ignored by animal studies such as political economy.
2. Rejects pseudo-objective academic analysis by explicitly clarifying its normative values and political commitments, such that there are no positivist illusions whatsoever that theory is disinterested or writing and research is nonpolitical. To support experiential understanding and subjectivity.
3. Eschews narrow academic viewpoints and the debilitating theory-for-theory's sake position in order to link theory to practice, analysis to politics, and the academy to the community.
4. Advances a holistic understanding of the commonality of oppressions, such that speciesism, sexism, racism, ableism, statism, classism, militarism and other

hierarchical ideologies and institutions are viewed as parts of a larger, interlocking, global system of domination.

5. Rejects apolitical, conservative, and liberal positions in order to advance an anti-capitalist, and, more generally, a radical anti-hierarchical politics. This orientation seeks to dismantle all structures of exploitation, domination, oppression, torture, killing, and power in favor of decentralizing and democratizing society at all levels and on a global basis.
6. Rejects reformist, single-issue, nation-based, legislative, strictly animal interest politics in favor of alliance politics and solidarity with other struggles against oppression and hierarchy.
7. Champions a politics of total liberation which grasps the need for, and the inseparability of, human, nonhuman animal, and Earth liberation and freedom for all in one comprehensive, though diverse, struggle; to quote Martin Luther King, Jr.: *"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."*
8. Deconstructs and reconstructs the socially constructed binary oppositions between human and nonhuman animals, a move basic to mainstream animal studies, but also looks to illuminate related dichotomies between culture and nature, civilization and wilderness, and other dominator hierarchies to emphasize the historical limits placed upon humanity, nonhuman animals, cultural/political norms, and the liberation of nature as part of a transformative project that seeks to transcend these limits towards greater freedom, peace, and ecological harmony.

9. Openly supports and examines controversial radical politics and strategies used in all kinds of social justice movements, such as those that involve economic sabotage from boycotts to direct action toward the goal of peace.
10. Seeks to create openings for constructive critical dialogue on issues relevant to critical animal studies across a wide-range of academic groups; citizens and grassroots activists; the staffs of policy and social service organizations; and people in private, public, and non-profit sectors. Through—and only through—new paradigms of ecopedagogy, bridge-building with other social movements, and a solidarity-based alliance politics, it is possible to build the new forms of consciousness, knowledge, and social institutions that are necessary to dissolve the hierarchical society that has enslaved this planet for the last ten thousand years (Best et al., 2007, pp. 1–2). (Nocella, 2011, pp. 102–104)

The first aforementioned principle seeks "to avoid the scholasticism, jargon-laden language … that infects so much academic writing" (Nocella, 2011, p. 101, citing Best, 2007, p. 1). The research produced under this theoretical lens is thereby written in a way that any person, even outside the field, could understand, while simultaneously including perspectives that intersect with nonhuman animals in our world. These additional perspectives work together to create a more comprehensive image of what is going on.

The second principle acknowledges the "masks of objectivity and neutrality that in fact hide covert commitments and by default support systems of oppression" (Nocella, 2011, p. 101) within academic research and writing. The writing and research that emerge from this framework are political and seek to inspire change.

The third principle speaks to the field's commitment to collecting a "broad and holistic understanding" in order to achieve "an engaged critical praxis that promotes the listening and defending space and place for marginalized and silenced nonhuman voices to be heard" (Nocella, 2011, pp. 101, 102).

The fourth principle depicts the field's understanding of "hierarchical power systems (e.g., racism, sexism, classism, and speciesism) and their intricate interrelationships, explores the systemic destructive effects of capitalism on all life and the earth, and views animal liberation and human liberation as inseparably interrelated projects'' (Nocella, 2011, p. 101, citing Best, 2007, p. 1). A critical animal studies perspective finds that systems of oppression are rooted in speciesism, thereby demonstrating that the "domination of human over human is inseparable from the domination of human over animal" (Best, 2009, p. 18). The power relations created within these hierarchies continue to metastasize and stabilize the neoliberal capitalist economic system that commodifies all bodies (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2018). As such, CAS calls for purposeful activism (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2018; Nocella et al., 2014; Taylor & Twine, 2014), also exemplified through the sixth principle.

The fifth principle alludes to the notion of anarchism as a form of rebellion, and calls for total liberation. Liberation here is understood as something that can only be achieved once all systems of exploitation and oppression are removed from all societies.

The sixth principle advocates for policies that seek the elimination of oppression for all living beings through solidarity with social justice movements. Here, the relation between different forms of oppression is acknowledged and challenged by addressing the built-in systems of power that privilege some and not others.

The seventh principle, related to the fifth, understands that total liberation is interconnected with all beings: humans, animals, and other life on the planet. Only when all beings are free from any form of injustice can we achieve total liberation.

The eighth principle gestures to dismantling binaries and elucidating interconnectedness, especially between nonhuman animals and humans.

Finally, the ninth and tenth principles are rooted in advocacy and activism—preferably through open dialogue (Freire, 1970), or through any means necessary. Nocella (2011), citing Best (2007) in the introduction to Volume 5, Issue 1 (2007) of the *Journal of Critical Animal Studies*, views the field of CAS "as a means to the end of illuminating and eliminating domination" (p. 101). Taylor and Twine (2014) explain that CAS is "concerned with the nexus of activism, academia and animal suffering and maltreatment," which is especially important in the 21st century as "ecology and animal life face unprecedented threats" (p. 2). The authors argue that within this period of uncertainty and crisis, the "critical" in CAS expresses "urgency" (p. 2). Collectively, humans need to reflect on their actions and choices, and advocate for the elimination of any form of oppression.

According to CAS, to eliminate domination we must first acknowledge not only that it exists but also that it owes its existence to normalization. CAS urges us to confront "this unthinkability, the taken-for-granted assumptions that form a hidden structure of violence and that make the most unthinkable atrocities seem an acceptable part of everyday life" (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2018, pp. 1–2). These atrocities benefit humans through the subordination of nonhuman animals and are deemed normal because of speciesism. Sorenson and Matsuoka (2019), citing Corrigan et. al (2001), explain that to cultivate change we should apply a three-pronged approach: "educate, contact, protest" (p. 7). Education is necessary to provide the

information needed to inspire protest to drive change; however, positive contact between human and nonhuman animals is necessary for "people to change their attitudes and behaviours" (Sorenson & Matsuoka, 2019, p. 8). Direct positive contact gives individuals the ability to experience the complexities of animal life and inspire the empathy necessary to disrupt the hierarchical and exploitative relationships that dominate human-animal interaction. Contact is regarded as a transformative practice that can lead to ethical treatment of nonhuman animals within society.

It is a commitment of CAS to "unsettle speciesism," to destabilize these "fundamental power relations, which sustain the capitalist economic system that commodifies all animals" for the benefit for nonhuman animals, but also for human liberation (Sorenson & Matsuoka, 2019, p. 2). Further, CAS theorists argue that systems of oppression are inextricably linked: "Human liberations should not be held distinct from nonhuman animal liberation" (Sorenson & Matsuoka, 2019, p. 160, citing Davis, 2014, p. 227). Sorenson (2011) expands: "A society that commodifies animals and permits massive abuse and cruelty to persist is unlikely to develop compassionate policies regarding human beings. Under capitalism, these abuses are justified in terms of profit and property relationships" (p. 237). Transformation and elimination of oppressive systems, it is argued, are therefore beneficial for both human and nonhuman animals.

CAS and Intersectionality

Before CAS, intersectionality was originally championed by ecofeminists (Taylor & Twine, 2014) to highlight the intersection between the exploitation of nonhuman animals and "dominant categories of gender, 'race' and class" (p. 4). Taylor and Twine (2014) explain that this approach challenged "the humanist premise of many extant feminist anti-capitalist and anti-racist politics by pointing out that dominant identities and practices of gender, 'race' and

class help maintain the human exploitation of animals" (p. 4). In its creation, CAS adapted and broadened intersectionality to include the experiences of nonhuman animals, along with those of humans.

In their chapter "Conclusion: Future Directions for Critical Animal Studies," Pedersen and Stanescu (2014) elucidate the link between CAS and intersectionality. The authors assert, "While we find the commonly used term 'intersectionality' useful in helping to 'connect' various interlocking forms of violence and oppression … we worry that it misses the reality that they are not 'separate' in the first place" (p. 265). They argue that forms of violence and oppression are inherently interconnected and intertwined; however, they caution against imposing the ways in which we assess and assign value to individuals, institutions, and ideas, onto nonhuman animals. Pedersen and Stanescu draw on the insights of philosophers Heidegger, Deleuze, and Guattari and argue that "there is an acknowledgment that nonhuman may experience, interact, enjoy or dislike their world in vastly different ways from either humans or each other" (p. 266). They further explain, "We must be in shared solidarity with the suffering of nonhuman animals but we must, at the same time, do so in ways that are attentive to uniqueness and difference of the subjecthood of their very experience of the world" (p. 266). Within a CAS framework, then, an intersectional approach understands the inherent worth of nonhuman animal life while also critiquing "the anthropocentric worldview and value system" (Pedersen & Stanescu, 2014, p. 266).

Studies on the History of Hierarchies

Nibert (2014) traces "systemic human exploitation and social stratification … to the advent of agricultural society roughly 10,000 years ago" (p. ix). The researcher claims that social hierarchy began with the hunting of large animals through the creation of weapons (p. x): "Those

who were most successful at such killing exerted growing power" (p. ix). A primarily male pursuit, hunting and "the possession of large numbers of these other animals became a sign of wealth and dominance" (Nibert, 2014, p. ix). Males topping the social hierarchy soon began to also commodify "women and devalued people" (p. ix): "Growing numbers of men on the backs of horses, armed with weapons—originally created for killing other animals—were dispatched by elites to raid other peoples for their captive animals and other sources of wealth" (p. ix). Highly aggressive Eurasian nomadic pastoralists like Attila the Hun and Genghis Khan successfully invaded and overtook weaker societies through the enslavement and murder of weaker and lower socially ranked men, the entrapment of women, and the exploitation of animals as "laborers, rations, and instruments of war" (Nibert, 2014, p. ix).

The Eurasian custom of exploiting any being deemed weaker or lesser was "spread through imperialism and soon overwhelmed the rest of the world" (Nibert, 2014, p. x). Imperialism relied on the wealth—"much of which was in the form of the skins, hair, body fat, and tusks of other animals and the land and water needed to expand profitable ranching operations" (p. x)—and social power distributed to elite males. Nibert (2014) explains,

> The destructive invasions relied on state power, and the carnage was rationalized by the use of racism, sexism, speciesism, and other reprehensible ideologies. The resulting ill-gotten wealth allowed the rise of capitalism, a system birthed and continually nourished by the bloody entangled oppression of the great mass of humans and other animals.… By the mid-twentieth century, the expansion of the oppression of other animals as food through the animal industrial complex (AIC) and the convergence and growth of the military industrial complex (MIC) began to generate enormous profits. The MIC and AIC became mutually reinforcing systems of domination—continuing the

> inextricable link between the oppression of other animals and human violence that plagued the history of the world. (p. x)

Today, neoliberal capitalism justifies any ideology that will continue to oppress marginalized beings while lending even more power to those at the top, regardless of how reprehensible the entailed subjugation practices are. Nibert (2014) details,

> The AIC is striving to profitably double the consumption of animal products globally by midcentury. To that end, dwindling vital resources such as fresh water, topsoil, and fossil fuel, all crucial for supporting a growing world human population, are being massively squandered. Moreover, raising other animals for food is responsible for as much as 51 percent of anthropic greenhouse gas emissions. Global warming already is producing violent storms, floods, severe droughts, wildfires, and record temperatures, all of which reduce harvests and make future food shortages all but certain. While hedge funds, global corporations, and other investors in the AIC are partaking in land grabs, appropriating tens of millions of acres in Africa and Latin America for future ranching and feed-grain ventures, the MIC and entrenched "national security" advisors are planning a military response to a future of scarce resources, food shortages, and global violence. (x–xi)

According to Salter (2014), the military industrial complex (MIC) and the animal industrial complex (AIC) reinforce each other: The AIC "is foundational and a central feature of the military-industrial complex as it exists today. The exploitation of nonhuman animals is a key feature of war: whether this be direct or indirect uses" (p. 6). Nonhuman animals are essential to the current foundation of the MIC and therefore are being bred and fed: "A tremendous amount of grain is required for the rapid growth of tens of billions of other animals" (Nibert, 2013, p. 240). The grain feeding nonhuman animals could alternatively be used to feed an estimated one

billion humans who remain malnourished (p. 240). Citing Richard Manning's "The Oil We Eat" (2004), Nibert (2013) reports that 45% of the grain grown in Mexico is fed to livestock (p. 240). In Egypt this figure is 31%, and in China 26%: "All of these places have poor people who could use the grain, but they can't afford it" (Nibert, 2013, p. 240). Rather than being used to feed poor and hungry humans, grain is used to feed nonhuman animals because when fattened they serve to generate profit for the already powerful.

Women and Animals: The Overlap

In this section I review the connection between systems of hierarchies that oppress women and nonhuman animals. In "Caring About Suffering: A Feminist Exploration," Carol J. Adams (1996) explicitly states the goal of her work: "I need to make visible the invisible—the lives of women and the experience of animals used by humans—while identifying the theoretical structures that maintained this invisibility" (p. 198). Through a feminist analysis of care, Adams (1996) deduced that the animal rights debate contributes to the oppression of women because of its dependence on the notion of an autonomous individual. Citing Kaschak (1992), Adams (1996) explains that the autonomous individual is a male ideal from the Enlightenment period where one enters a lone quest for knowledge. Autonomy here "renders invisible the whole network of relationships that are sustaining the solitary individual" (p. 201) and is therefore an "illusion, because it depends on the invisibility of women's caring activities" (p. 201). Further, she concludes, "the unacknowledged context for animal rights philosophy is the fact that we live in a patriarchal culture" (p. 201).

Adams (1996) critiqued the animal advocacy movement for failing to address animal suffering's connection to the patriarchal culture within which it occurs and, further, its oppression of women. She uses the examples of animal activism campaigns photographing

naked supermodels to sell the idea that it is better to go naked than to wear fur (p. 220) and porngraphic imaging of women in traps to highlight the objectification of female bodies. The issue here is twofold: Women are sexualized for the needs of men, and the issue of fur becomes about women's bodies rather than the oppression of animals. Thus, women and animals are simultaneously oppressed. The author concludes,

> The individuality of animals, and thus the individuality of their suffering, is never acknowledged. Instead, men's definitions about sexuality, and needs are identified as of primary concern to the animal defense movement. Meanwhile the task for women remains for us to recognize men's definitions, sexuality, and needs *not* as part of ourselves but as part of the sex-species system which is the context of our lives. Our caring about animals occurs in this context. (p. 221)

As noted in Lockie et al.'s (2002) review of Adams's (1990) *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, it is important to recognize the "contradiction between campaigning against one set of injustices while participating in another" (p. 362). As a theoretical framework, CAS not only recognizes the overlap between all forms of oppression but also works to expose the systems through which any being is oppressed.

Terminology and its Orienting Capacity

In my elucidation of conceptual frameworks underpinning this project, I have chosen to include a section highlighting the etymological histories of the words *animal* and *language* and other words associated with these lexical items. This historical review provides a perspective on the relation between the original meaning of a word and its inferred connotation through implicit economic, political, and other influences at different moments in history. The analytic process

here entails the stripping of layers and suspension of assumptions, reflected in the Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology that undergirds CAS.

Animal. The word *animal* today is used and understood as any nonhuman being. Dogs, cows, and horses would all be considered animals. However, as the *Online Etymology Dictionary* notes, this early-14th-century word comes from the Latin word *anima* meaning "breath, soul; current of air" (Animal (n.), n.d.). The Latin word *animale* comes from *anima* meaning "'any sentient living creature' (including humans)." The words *anima* and *animale* share the root "*ane- 'to breathe.'" The word *animal* is scarcely used prior to 1600 CE and most "commonly only of non-human creatures," but also applied "derisively [to] brutish humans … in which the 'animal,' or non-rational, non-spiritual nature is ascendant … from [the] 1580s." Before animals, brutish humans were referred to as beasts (Animal (n.), n.d.).

Beast. *Beast*, a 13th-century word, was used in Middle English as the generic word for "wild creature" (Beast (n.), n.d.). *Beast* comes from the Old French *beste* meaning "'one of the lower animals' (opposed to *man),* especially 'a four-footed animals,' also 'a marvellous creature, a monster' (mermaids, werewolves, lamia, satyrs, the beast of the Apocalypse), 'a brutish or stupid man'" (Beast (n.), n.d.).

Deer. *Deer*, an Old English word meaning "wild animal, beast, any wild quadruped," was applied to ants and fish too (Deer (n.), n.d.). It comes from the "Proto-Germanic **deuzam*, the general Germanic word for 'animal' (as opposed to man) but often restricted to 'wild animal'" (Deer (n.), n.d.). Like the root of *animal*, the root of *deer*, "*dehusom*," means "creature that breathes" (Deer (n.), n.d.). Further, "specialization to a specific animal began in Old English … was common by 15c. [CE]., and is now complete. It happened probably via hunting" (Deer (n.), n.d.).

Creature. *Creature*, a 13th-century Old French word, means "'anything created,' hence 'a thing' in general, animate or not, but most commonly 'a living being'" (Creature (n.), n.d.). The word was "used of humans in limited cases, in contempt, commiseration, endearment." From the 1580s until 1610s, when applied to humans, the word referred to a "person who owes his rise and fortune to another" (Creature (n.), n.d.). In the 1610s, under the influence of the biblical passage "1 Timothy 4:4 'Every creature of God is good'" the word acquired the meaning of "anything that ministers to man's comforts" (Creature (n.), n.d.). By the 1630s, the "jocular use of *creature* [was] 'whiskey, intoxicating drink,'" and by the 1650s the word referred to "material comforts" (Creature (n.), n.d.).

Language. The root of *language*, from the Old French *langage* ("Language (n.)"), is *dnghu* meaning 'tongue' (Language (n.), n.d.). In the 12th century CE, *language* meant "manner of expression," whereas in the late 13th century it meant "words, what is said, conversation, talk" (Language (n.), n.d.). The shift to a human-centred definition occurred in the 13th century. Similarly, in the 13th century, before the word *animal* was used, *beast* described a low-ranking animal or a brutish or stupid man.

In summary, the interpretation shaping definitions of particular words, such as *beast* and *language*, marks the evident separation between human animal and nonhuman animal within language. The interpretation of both *beast* and *language* is rooted in speciesism. In the 13th century, the word *beast* emerged to dichotomize human and nonhuman animals (Beast (n.), n.d.). The interpreted meaning of *language* simultaneously changes to encompass very human characteristics like the use of words, holding conversation, and talking (Language (n.), n.d.).

Engaged Policy and Practices and Critical Policy Analysis

A second conceptual framework situates this project within an engaged policy and practices (EPP) perspective (Davis, 2014; Davis & Phyak, 2017; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Schecter et al., 2014), using a critical policy lens. While critical policy theorists (e.g., Ball, 1993; Levinson et al., 2009) emphasize the significance of understanding the societal influences on both the policymaking process and the subsequent enactment of those policies, engaged policy researchers focus on evaluating the impact of policy with a view to critical advocacy and change (Simons et al., 2009; Tollefson, 2013).

Policy, as defined by Levinson et al. (2009), is a "complex, ongoing social practice of normative cultural production constituted by diverse actors across diverse contexts" (p. 770). While policymakers wield power in that the formation of the policy itself as text creates "governing statements about what can and should be done" (p. 770), Ball (1993) underscores the influence of different members and institutional bodies throughout the policymaking process: "Policies are represented differently by different actors and interests.… And these attempts to represent or re-represent policy sediment and build up over time spread confusion and allow for play in the playing-off of meanings" (p. 11). He also notes that each influence allows for variance in representation and interpretation by each policy actor. Indeed, when policy is put into practice, it is negotiated and transformed by policy actors (Levinson et al., 2009) and therefore lies beyond the control of the formal policymakers.

Ball (1993) further explains that the context and history of the policy, and policy actor, contribute to its subsequent interpretation and representation: "The text and its readers and the context of response all have histories. Policies enter existing patterns of inequality, e.g., the structure of local markets, local class relations. They 'impact' or are taken up differently as a

result.… Policy is not exterior to inequalities, although it may change them, it is also affected, inflected and deflected by them" (pp. 11–12). Using teachers as an example to explain the unpredictability of the application of policy while still acknowledging policies as "textual interventions into practice," Ball argues, "Although many teachers (and others) are proactive, 'writerly' readers of texts, their readings and reactions are not constructed of circumstances of their own making" (p. 12). Here policy is acknowledged as a phenomenon that teachers confront within their pedagogy, exercising a degree of agency while negotiating various entanglements that extend beyond the here and now of the classroom (Appadoo-Ramsamy, 2023).

Ball (1993) categorizes the effects of policy as either first- or second-order. First-order effects are evident changes to the practice or structure of an entire system, while second-order effects refer to "the impact of these changes on patterns of social access and opportunity and social justice" (p. 16). In addition to text, Ball further describes policy as a discourse in that it can "exercise power through a production of 'truth' and 'knowledge'" (p. 14). Policy as discourse, like policy as a text, creates boundaries about "what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority" (Ball, 1993, p. 14). Policy as text and policy as discourse are inextricably linked in that even through the ability to interpret policy, at the micro level, educators are limited by the discourse of the language of the curriculum. Therefore, even with the introduction of the environmental education curriculum in Ontario's K–12 classrooms, a first-order effect, the impact of this change on patterns of social justice, a second-order effect, has not yet been realized, especially with regard to the status of a warming planet with diminishing resources.

Ball (1993) goes on to explain that discourses "embody the meaning and use of propositions and words. Thus, certain possibilities for thought are constructed. Words are ordered

and combined in particular ways and other combinations are displaced or excluded" (p. 14). The construction of meaning, then, is intentional and is more impactful than the way in which we speak. Pulling from Foucault (1971), Ball (1993) argues, "We are the subjectives, the voices, the knowledge, the power relations that a discourse constructs and allows. We do not 'know' what we say, we 'are' what we say and do. In these terms we are spoken by policies, we take up the positions constructed for us within policies. This is a system of practices … and a set of values and ethics" (p. 14).

Policy as an Engaged Practice

My project proceeds from the understanding that schools are places where state ideologies relative to language and teaching are converted into practice. At the same time, as a socially engaged researcher I would want to explain relations entailed in the orientation of mainstream schooling towards the treatment of nonhuman animals by examining how evolving politically situated perspectives may result in the negotiation of new educational practices, or adaptation of extant ones, both locally and on a broader societal level (Lin et al., 2002).

Davis (2014) explains that policy as an engaged practice intends to "promote agency at the intersection of macro, meso, and micro levels of conceptualizing and enacting policy-making" (p. 93). Ricento and Hornberger (1996) compare the macro, meso, and micro levels of policy process to the layers of an onion (p. 408). These layers undergird language policy and practices at different levels—from the outer layers of broad policy objectives as articulated in official regulations and guidelines, through their discursive reconfigurations by key actors in various institutional settings, to their interpretation, contestation, or adaptation by subjects at the local level. For the purposes of this project, provincial-level educational policy

and its agents represent the macro level, school boards and schools constitute the meso level, and settings where professional educators enact pedagogy constitute the micro level.

According to Davis and Phyak (2017), policy as an engaged practice utilizes a theoretical perspective grounded in a vision of educational equity "in which all concerned—communities, parents, students, educators, and advocates—collectively imagine new strategies for resisting global neoliberal marginalization" (p. i). However, to move to a practice that is equitable and rooted in social justice, Davis (2014) asserts policy facilitators must analyze how "macro level ideologies and imposed policies/practices may be detrimental to individuals and communities" (p. 9). In addition, engaged policy researchers emphasize the importance of critical reflection and reflexivity (Schecter et al., 2015). Within this perspective, school-based administrators and classroom practitioners engage in self-examination and ongoing dialogue and are positioned not as unwitting reproducers but rather at the heart of educational policy, given their strategic ability to transform institutional settings and bring about educational change.

Moreover, as scholars (Gutiérrez & Schecter, 2018; Schecter et al., 2014; Schecter et al., 2015) within an engaged policy and practices perspective have demonstrated, collaborative research presents an opportunity to involve professional educators and students at the macro, meso, and local infrastructural levels in dialogic processes that identify pockets of agency for interrupting extant schooling practices and influencing the outcomes of social processes that affect the lives of vulnerable beings. Thus, engaged policy researchers maintain the potential for transformative efforts led by professionals who are actively involved in conceptualizing and/or executing a desired innovation (Davis, 2014; Sutton & Levinson, 2001; Schecter et al., 2014).

Policy as Engaged Pedagogy in Schools

Ball et al. (2012) contend, "Policy is done by and done to teachers; they are actors and subjects, subject to and objects of policy" (p. 3). The interactions between teachers and policy underscore the nuanced nature of policy enactment in educational settings, where teachers serve as both the subjects and objects of policy, navigating its impacts on their professional practice and classroom environments. The authors explain enactment as a "creative processes of interpretation and recontextualization—that is, the translation of texts into action and the abstractions of policy ideas into contextualized practices—and this process involves 'interpretations of interpretations' (Rizvi and Kemmis 1987)" (p. 3). The researchers further explain that the level of interpretation varies "in relation to the apparatuses of power within which they are set and within the constraints and possibilities of context" (p. 3). The interplay between policy and practice in educational settings highlights the complexity and fluidity of the enactment process. Teachers, as both agents and recipients of policy, engage in a continual negotiation between official mandates and the realities of their classrooms. While policies provide a framework for action, their effectiveness ultimately depends on how they are translated into practice by those directly involved in their enactment. Therefore, understanding the nuanced relationship between policy and practice is essential for fostering meaningful educational reform and promoting positive outcomes for students and teachers alike (Davis, 2014).

In this study, I use critical discourse analysis (CDA) to investigate formal educational policy as text and discourse in order to uncover its influences on curriculum at the macro, meso and micro levels.

Policy as Text. Pulling from Martin Heidegger's understanding of language through hermeneutic phenomenology and, predominantly, van Dijk's (1993a, 1993b, 2001) approach (see

Chapter 4), a policy-as-text focus elucidates how macro-level ideologies correspond to meso-level analyses that compel standardized epistemologies realized in schools (Davis, 2014, p. 92). My research project begins from an understanding that schools are places in which state ideologies related to social and political agendas are converted into practice through formally designated curriculum texts (Shohamy, 2006). Curriculum text is decoded and put into practice via actors' interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources, and context (Ball, 1993, p. 11).

Policy as Discourse. According to Davis (2014), it is through dialogue that all participants take on the role of "learner" (p. 93), and that collective understanding and awareness of the possibility of transformation is achieved. Informed by political activism (p. 83), this dialogic approach intends to foster social justice by portraying "processes and outcomes that are always in a state of evolving and shifting meanings through growing awareness, and changing local, national and global conditions" (Davis, 2014, p. 93). Davis and Phyak (2017) argue that "drawing communities of families, educators, and advocates into dialogic engagement grounded in collaborative actions provides insights into understanding ways in which equitable policy is created and maintained" (p. 106).

In this project, collaborative action research (CAR) facilitated a dialogic approach, emphasizing parity among participants and researchers (Clift et al., 1990, citing Tikunoff et al., 1979). Together, we used shared experiences to articulate problems and determine actions to make significant changes within the participants and their workplace (Clift et al., 1990; Jaipal-Jamani et al., 2022; Oja & Pine, 1987; Wells, 2009) through "a cycle of planning, fact-finding, and execution or a cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting" (Jaipal-Jamani et al., 2002). Oja and Pine (1987) explain that "teachers participating in

collaborative action research become agents of their own change," as it fosters professional inquiry and growth (p. 110). As a result, teachers feel both empowered and capable of making meaningful changes to their own pedagogy, that of their colleagues, and the overall improvement of the school (Clift et. al, 1990; McNiff et al., 1996; McNiff & Whitehead, 2002).

In this study, teacher and student participants collaborated with me, in the course of an extended life-history interview, to create a speciesist-free lesson or unit that emphasizes the importance of nonhuman animal life,while respecting the parameters of the Ontario curriculum guidelines. Though not entirely successful (see Chapters 5 and 6), the CAR component of the study was able to provide participants with a dialogic space where they were encouraged to interrogate their own ideologies and reflect on ways in which the value and importance of animal life can be introduced so that it permeates into social consciousness.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have introduced the theoretical underpinnings of my research study. In so doing, I have paired two conceptual frameworks that serve complementary roles in addressing the complex agenda of this project. These roles are:

- through a critical animal studies approach, to provide a historically grounded social critique of the manner in which Ontario's official policy regarding language and literacy and social sciences curriculum serves to instantiate cruel and nonjudicious practices regarding the mistreatment and exploitation of nonhuman animals; and
- through an engaged policy and practices perspective embedded in a collaborative action research approach, to create opportunities for teachers and students to interrupt the enactment of these pernicious policies and engage in imagining new strategies for

resisting the oppression of defenceless beings and obligating the system to adapt to new cultural spaces.

In the chapters that follow, I explore the potential of an engaged policy approach for generating animal-centred learning scenarios that have a transformative effect on both teachers and youth on the cusp of assuming their global citizenship responsibilities.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

In this chapter, I examine the literature investigating the dynamic between humans and nonhuman animals. I commence by exploring research on communication patterns in both nonhuman animals and humans, followed by an analysis of the impact of language typically used by humans to characterize nonhuman animals and their environment. Subsequently, I scrutinize the societal positioning of nonhuman animals and their exploitation by humans as sources of food, profit, and entertainment. Then I delve into the studies that examine the implementation of pedagogy focusing on nonhuman animals in postsecondary education, as well as the lack of research on this topic in K–12 education. Concluding this chapter, I provide a brief examination of research in Indigenous knowledge, a topic that provides a segue for a paradigm shift towards a grammar that values nonhuman animal life.

Communication in Nonhuman Animals and in Humans

I begin this literature review by examining research on the different forms of communication observed in nonhuman animals. Then, I explore particular words in the English language that highlight the speciesist premises used to describe both nonhuman animals and the environment that they share with humans.

Nonhuman Animal Communication

Donovan, J., & Adams, C. J. (1996). Beyond animal rights: A feminist caring ethic for the treatment of animals.

Hauser et al. (2002) observe that languages used on Earth are species-specific: “If a martian graced our planet … it would notice the absence of a universal code of communication” (p. 1569). Adams (1995), in Donovan and Adams (1996) edited collection *Beyond Animal*

Rights: A Feminist Caring Ethic for the Treatment of Animals, however, references Scarry (1985) to suggest that the language of pain is a universal form of communication:

> Pain, Scarry might have observed, thus eradicates one of the most firmly held points between humans and other animals: language use. Indeed pain's "resistance to language is not simply one of its incidental or accidental attributes, but is essential to what it is. It shatters language … it transposes humans to animal status". (p. 179-179)

Communication, then, exists even without words. Moreover, even though nonhuman animals are commonly understood as not having language (when language is conceptualized only in forms normalized by humans), studies (Miller et al., 2011; Rendell & Whitehead 2004, 2005) suggest animals do hold language in a way similar to humans.

Rendell and Whitehead (2004, 2005) and Miller et al. (2011) study communication patterns among sperm whales. Although sperm whales do not have words in the same way that humans do, they produce codas (Rendell & Whitehead, 2004, p. 865). Codas, a term coined by Watkins and Schevill (1977), are "short stereotyped patterns of clicks produced in social contexts" (Rendell & Whitehead, 2004, p. 865). Clicks produced by sperm whales generally last less than 3 seconds (p. 866), and over a one-month period "nine largely unrelated animals … yielded 879 codas of 32 distinctive types" (Rendell & Whitehead, 2004, p. 865). These codas did not change significantly over time (Rendell & Whitehead, 2005, p. 195). Rendell and Whitehead's (2005) finding suggests the possibility that whale repertoires do not change over time (p. 195).

Moreover, Rendell and Whitehead (2004) found that "several coda types were produced by more than one animal [and therefore] the codas recorded … represent a shared repertoire, whereby coda production is not limited to a single animal and coda types are shared between

individuals within the unit" (p. 865). Even though the repertoire is shared, there are "distinctive dialects" among sperm whales, determined by the "time intervals between clicks in a coda" (Rendell & Whitehead, 2004, p. 866). Further, coda production is much more likely "when animals are together socializing at the surface … [and] for this reason, codas are presumed to have a social function" (Rendell & Whitehead, 2004, p. 866). Similarly, Antunes's (2009) study found that "individual-specific variation within coda types could allow distinction between group members" (p. 729). The study examined sperm whales within a social unit, focusing on one coda type which showed their vocalizations are indications of social rank. Language's social function for sperm whales, then, positions the being in relation to its peers, with a hierarchy.

Rendell and Whitehead's (2004, 2005) and Antunes's (2009) research demonstrate that sperm whales share language. Their language, however, does not meet the meaning of language held after the 13th century (Language (n.), n.d.) because it does not include words. According to the etymology of the word *language*, words and what is understood by others as words, along with any other utterance of a sign that is also commonly understood as representing words, are the embodiment of language.

Speech, for example, has traditionally been considered "special" and thus "based on uniquely human mechanisms.… Surprisingly, [the] research has turned up little evidence for uniquely human mechanisms special to speech, despite a persistent tendency to assume the uniqueness even in the absence of relevant animal data" (Hauser et al., 2002, p. 1574). Animal communication, then, is largely assumed to be different from human communication. Rather than explore animal communication's uniqueness and possible similarities, humans have othered and subordinated animals based partially on their communication.

Anthropocentric Perspectives in the Language of Education

I begin this section by noting that this dissertation does not attempt to tackle and untangle the English language but merely highlights some of its limitations in relation to the study of the human-animal relationship. Bell and Russell (1999), in their work "Life Ties: Disrupting Anthropocentrism in Language Arts Educations," challenge anthropocentric perspectives in language arts education and advocate for an inclusive approach that values nonhuman life. They begin by explaining the separation of humans from the environment and how that is reflected in classroom learning:

> As Neil Evernden contends, the absolute separation of humans from nature has allowed us to claim the unique qualities which justify our domination of the Earth (1992, 96).… Children may learn in a setting which excludes any direct interaction with the subjects of study, and in a language which likewise denies reciprocity with the rest of nature by defining it as mechanical and determinate. (pp. 68–70)

By framing nature (the land and animals) in this way, education fails to foster a sense of reciprocity or interconnectedness between humans and the rest of nature. The separation between humans and nature is strengthened with the language we use to describe nature. Bell and Russell (1999) list terms like *pest*, *weed*, *vermin*, and *varmint* (p. 73) to highlight the influence language has on our relationship with nature. The authors argue that these terms "set fatal contours to our relationships with creatures so designated. The words themselves call out for a particular response.… Meanwhile, euphemisms like the 'harvesting' of forests and the 'culling' of wildlife conceal the slaughter" (p. 73–74). The authors argue that the normalization of our language conceals "any sense of nonhuman beings as experiencing subjects of a life, any recognition of their rightness or integrity" (p. 74).

In response to the impact of our language, the authors call for work to be done by educators and policymakers to consider the implications of the language we use in the classroom. The agenda Bell and Russell (1999) endorse

> involves recuperating meanings that have been trivialized or forgotten through common rhetorical usages. Searching for words and stories that better accommodate the wild diversity of human and nonhuman beings also entails a critical exploration of dominant and alternative articulations and the reasons for and implications of representing nature in particular ways. (p. 74)

The power language holds, and its influence in normalizing, villainizing, or idealizing certain ways of thinking and acting is an important part of the overall conversation in this study. In the following subsection of this literature review, I discuss research that reveals the actual uses of nonhuman animals notwithstanding the manipulation of the English language to divert attention elsewhere.

Animals and the Western World: Food, Revenue, and Entertainment

Neoliberal capitalist government, in place in the Western world, works to push humans to prioritize monetary gains above all else, regardless of the consequences. Here, I explore research on the consequences for nonhuman animals as they are used as a source of food, revenue, and entertainment.

Meat: An Indicator of Wealth and a Way to Generate Revenue

Nibert (2013), citing Pimentel and Pimentel (2008), reports that in 2010 an estimated 2.25 billion people lived on a meat-based diet, 4.5 billion lived on an almost completely plant-based diet, while almost "one billion had little access to any food and were malnourished" (p. 233). Citing Poore and Nemecek (2018) and UNEP (2010), Blattner (2020) explains that

today the animal agriculture industry "consumes 70% of global fresh water, utilizes 38% of global arable land, and causes 14% of the world's GHG emissions, generating more methane, nitrous oxide, and carbon dioxide than the worldwide transport sector" (p. 54). Moreover, hamburger culture and related fast-food meats "have become a major symbol of progress and modernity" (Nibert, 2013, pp. 233, 235). The appeal of fast-food and drive-through meat-based meals in developed countries is so big and booming that food must be made readily available to workers at nearly every corner at all times. In 2007, the CEO of McDonald's, the world's largest retail food corporation, spoke about the endless possibilities for franchise expansion in China because of its rapidly growing population (Nibert, 2013, p. 235).

Not surprisingly, McDonald's collaborated with oil companies to generate revenue for both food and oil production sectors of the economy: "Seeing the potential for drive-through service in China increase as more people there purchase automobiles, in 2006 McDonald's signed an agreement with the Chinese state oil company, Sinopec, giving it the right to open a restaurant at any of Sinopec's thirty thousand gas stations" (Nibert, 2013, p. 235, citing the television program *Big Mac: Inside the McDonald's Empire*, 2007). The agreement between McDonalds and Sinopec increased the demand not only for meat but also for dairy, fish, and eggs, thereby generating revenue for diverse sectors of the economy. It therefore follows that McDonald's and other "participants in the animal-industrial complex" (Nibert, 2013, p. 235) would see it in their interests to continue to increase the global demand for meat.

According to Nibert (2013), citing the World Watch Institute (2005), the global supply of meat quadrupled from 1961 to 2010, reaching a total of 286 million tons (p. 234). Today, the global production of meat has reached an estimated 325 million tons (Shahbandeh, 2024), 15% of which came from the United States alone (Meat Institute, n.d.). The global meat expansion

was prompted by a surplus of corn—which is now fed to animals. Citing Morgan (1980), Nibert (2013) reports, "Throughout the 1960s the USDA worked closely with Cargill and other grain companies to establish Asian *poultry* industries, baking industries, *cattle*-fattening yards and fast food chains—all of which absorbed U.S. grains" (p. 234, italics in original). Feed-grain producers then promoted meat, dairy, and egg production, all of which required animal feed. The meat, dairy, and egg sectors then exhausted the corn surplus and created new substitute products that would generate more capital. The decrease in corn, along with the 1996 Farm Bill, "an act that ended most agricultural supply management measures and price supports" because of the surplus, "saved factory farms an average of $3.9 billion a year beginning in 1997" (Nibert, 2013, p. 234). The interconnectedness between capital generated by large corporations and the normalized practices of food consumption elucidates the economically driven agenda behind the government decisions.

Animals in Entertainment

In the Western world, animals are readily available for human entertainment. The entertainment comes in endless forms: zoos, circuses, aquariums, dog racing, horse racing, rodeos, bullfighting, running with the bulls, and even animals as characters in film and television, to name a few. There is a significant body of research that untangles the horrors animals endure and the simultaneous profits made within the realm of animals in entertainment; however, with this, there is also an "increased awareness of and sympathy for the welfare and conservation of wild animals around the world" (Veasey, 2022, p. 293). What is important to note, for the purposes of this research study, is why animal entertainment exists. Stoddart (2013) explains,

> Mankind's control, ownership and display of animals have seemed to fulfill our desired mastery over the natural world. Writing on zoos, circuses and menageries has also emphasised how these entertainments have showcased colonial expansion, wherein the conquered nations have been indirectly represented through animals that are once decorously exotic but, at the same time, in need of control and containment. (p. 26)

Thus, animals are not seen in Western society as anything more than a commodity. Despite growing awareness of animal welfare issues and sympathy for animal suffering, the industry of animal entertainment, driven by societal norms and cultural expectations, continues to thrive. The continuation of the animal entertainment industry raises profound ethical questions about exploiting nonhuman animals for human pleasure and profit, calling for a reevaluation of our relationship with animals and a shift towards more compassionate and respectful treatment.

Educational Policies and the Representation of Nonhuman Animals

In his short book *Education: A Very Short Introduction*, Gary Thomas (2013) describes schools as "instruments of the dominant economic system" that produce "workers who possessed and could use particular kinds of knowledge" (p. 13). Language education in Ontario, specifically, is rooted in the "evangelical belief that, despite the persistence of sin in the world, all people and therefore all children were capable of being saved, and that the antisocial or criminal behaviour was the result of social conditions and environment" (Thomas, 2013, p. 194). Evangelical education reformers in the "1800s and early 1900s [asserted that] through carefully regulated education, students would gain respectability or the mark of 'civilization': respectable religion (Christianity), respectable speech and manners (standard English), and respect for and desire for private property (capitalism)" (Harper, 1997, p. 194). Standard English, mandated through and reflected in the curriculum documents, remains the language of instruction in

Ontario. English, the lingua franca, is part of the particular knowledge Canadian workers must possess to further the Canadian economic system. Clyne (2000) defines a lingua franca as an "intermediary code" (p. 83) used in intercultural communication between two individuals, whose first language is different from the lingua franca (p. 83), so that they are able to communicate:

> English is like no other language in its current role internationally, indeed like no other at any moment in history. Although there are, and have previously been, other international languages, the case of English is different in fundamental ways: for the extent of its diffusion geographically; for the enormous cultural diversity of the speakers who use it; and for the infinitely varied domains in which it is found and purposes it serves. (Dewey, 2007, p. 333)

Because of its seminal role as a lingua franca, the English language has been commoditized into a form of capital.

According to Section 93 of the Canadian Constitution, the provincial government has jurisdiction over education and legislation in relation to education (Canada, 1982). Within Ontario, the Education Act "provide[s] the statutory basis for how education is delivered to students who are enrolled in the publicly funded school system in Ontario" (Government of Ontario, 2022). The Education Act (2024) maintains that its purpose is as the "foundation of a prosperous, caring and civil society" (s. 0.1 (1)) which "provide[s] students with the opportunity to realize their potential and develop into highly skilled, knowledgeable, caring citizens who contribute to their society" (s. 0.1 (2)). Further, the act gives the minister of education the power to determine what students must be taught and thus issue curriculum guidelines (s. 8). The minister then certifies that what is mandated to be taught within publicly funded Ontario schools fulfills the purpose of the Education Act.

Language education is at the centre of all public education. To contribute to and meet the demands of Canadian society, an individual must be literate (Community Literacy of Ontario, 2013). Within Ontario's curriculum document, literacy encompasses a multilayered ability to read, write, listen, speak, view, represent, and think critically about ideas. The definition of literacy is reflected in the language curriculum which "organizes the knowledge and skills that students need to become literate" into four "broad areas of learning—Oral Communication, Reading, Writing and Media Literacy" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, pp. 4–5). The ministry maintains that literacy must go beyond "reading and writing [so that] it builds on the fundamentals to nurture a deep knowledge and appreciation of language" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b). The ministry's interpretation suggests that language and being literate is more than the ability to read and write to a specified degree of accuracy and fluency; however, the standardized testing for literacy for all Grade 10 students in Ontario reflects a more reductionist view.

In Grade 10 of secondary-level education, all Ontario students must complete the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). According to the Education Quality and Accountability Office (2023) website, "The OSSLT is grounded in the *Ontario Curriculum* expectations for all subjects that address reading and writing skills up to the end of Grade 9." Cheng et al. (2009) explain, "Successful completion of the OSSLT, or the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC), a specially developed literacy course, is a requirement for graduation in Ontario" (p. 119). Contrary to the philosophy espoused in the Ontario curriculum documents, however, literacy is measured only through reading and writing proficiency. Reading and writing, therefore, are the ways through which literacy is measured, contrary to the four

broad areas of literacy (oral communication, reading, writing, and media literacy) promoted in the curriculum document: (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006).

Baldwin (1997) argues that "language, incontestably, reveals the speaker … also, far more dubiously, is meant to define the other" (p. 5). Fluency in English reveals a particular kind of educational training and power while simultaneously subordinating non-English varieties. I argue that the power here parallels that asserted over animals in entertainment. Further, Baldwin proclaims, "People evolve a language in order to describe and thus control their circumstances" (p. 5). North America has evolved English into a language of power, opportunity, and class: "Language is also a political instrument, means, and proof of power[;] it is the most vivid and crucial key to identity" (p. 5). Baldwin's assertion regarding the power of language is echoed in the Ontario curriculum document for language: "Language is the basis for thinking, communication, and learning.… Language is a fundamental element of identity and culture" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 3). Language and identity intersect in that the way in which language is used to convey messages shapes thinking and understanding about self and other. The denotations and connotations of English words have been used by those with power (i.e., policymakers) to promote dominant political agendas, values, and morals. Non–English speakers, as a result, are seen as subordinate and therefore exploitable. Nonhuman animals rank even lower than non–English speakers, because they do not hold a human language and therefore are more justifiably exploitable.

Animals in Schooling

In this section I explore the inclusion of nonhuman animals in schooling at the postsecondary level and in K–12. The studies discussed within this section showcase the interest and demand for courses that place nonhuman animals at the centre of the curriculum with a view

towards cultivating a transformative consciousness in postsecondary education. In contrast, in K–12, the literature reveals a lack of emphasis, at the policy level, on courses that prioritize placing nonhuman animals at the centre of the curriculum.

Development of Curriculum in Human-Animal Relations in Post-Secondary Classrooms

O'Brien (2016), in his article "Other(ed) Rabbits: Using Otherness as a Frame to Teach Critical Approaches to Human-Animal Relations in Japan," details the process of adapting an introductory-level film course offered at a university in Japan, along with reporting on student feedback. O'Brien was invited as a guest lecturer for the unit on human-animal relations. The course had a class of approximately 30 students. It included eight mandatory films paired with eight corresponding assignments, "with each film addressing a specific form of othered identity (race, gender, species, social class, etc.)" (p. 48). A unit focusing on "nonhuman animal otherness" (p. 50) was integrated into the curriculum to "provide students with a toolset to critically view media representations of nonhuman animals, akin to the representation of human difference and politics of its screening that the rest of the course dealt with" (p. 50). O'Brien's overarching goal was to foster critical thinking about human-animal relationships among students.

Nearly all assignments submitted for the nonhuman animal unit centred on the consumption of meat (O'Brien, 2016, p. 64). O'Brien observed a trend of gendered responses: female students expressed concern for nonhuman animal exploitation, while male students argued for the scientific justification of animal consumption and human superiority. The primary insight gained was an awareness of the conditions in which nonhuman animals are raised for consumption, leading to the belief that "educating others about what consuming nonhuman animals entailed was the moral thing to do" (p. 71). However, O'Brien noted that beneath this

awareness lay a strong belief "that consumption was natural and predetermined above the level of social construction" (p. 72).

Expanding on O'Brien's work, Russell (2019) developed a new graduate course in education focusing on animals to explore pedagogy and its intersections with animals, the environment, and social justice issues. The course, titled "Animals in Education," ran at full capacity for the first time in the fall of 2016 and was offered again as a result of high demand. Of the 40 students across both courses, 34 were women and 6 were men (p. 37). Russell (2019) explained that the course drew from interdisciplinary literature examining "the ways in which animals are often marginalized or erased in contemporary Western culture generally and in education specifically" (p. 35). These texts provided a framework for students to examine how particular animals were featured or hidden in curriculum, as well as their representations in children's literature, media, and advocacy campaigns (p. 35).

Russell (2019) reported that, initially, most students identified themselves as having no knowledge in animal-focused education but at the same time expressed certainty that they "loved animals" (p. 40). However, Russell (2019) suggested that students were more informed about animal-focused education as a result of their "own experiences, through explicit or implicit teaching in school and mostly through being marinated in anthropocentric cultures" (p. 40). Experiential knowledge led to passionate discussions and emotional responses regarding human relationships with food animals, hunting, dissection, animal experimentation, and zoos. Russell (2019) recounted instances where "frustration and anger erupted as students bore witness to the violence enacted on other animals or particular groups of people, or guilt and shame emerged as they grappled with their own capacity" (p. 40). Nevertheless, students remained hopeful about their potential to effect significant change in their classrooms through a more informed,

animal-focused pedagogy (p. 40). Ultimately, Russell (2019) anticipated that "Animals in Education" would become a regularly offered course and remained committed to its continued development (p. 41). Today, I teach this course to a group of master's students in a faculty of education at an Ontario university.

An increasing number of classes in postsecondary institutions have begun to implement and adapt existing courses to focus on human-animal relationships while centring the animal. However, the research continues to indicate a gap in K–12 classroom-based research on the benefits of using CAS, or animal-focused education, to teach human-animal relations.

CAS and Pedagogy

In their chapter titled "Radical Humility: Toward a More Holistic Critical Animal Studies Pedagogy," Corman and Vandrovcová (2014) elaborate on the enactment of a CAS pedagogy within postsecondary classrooms. CAS pedagogy vehemently opposes the banking model of education because "we are all perpetual students and teachers" (p. 153). Within a CAS pedagogy, self-reflection on personal biases is emphasized, whereas shaming is rejected. The authors suggest five strategies for enacting a CAS pedagogy: "(1) the importance of context, (2) bringing nonhuman animals into the conversation, (3) intersectionality of oppressions, (4) working with graphic images, and (5) incorporating activism" (Corman & Vandrovcová, 2014, p. 149). I elucidate each of these strategies below.

The Importance of Context. The authors suggest beginning a course within an introduction to pedagogy to "make strange some of the taken-for-granted assumptions and show students that while pedagogy may seem abstract, it is something that they are already engaged in and certainly have opinions about" (Corman & Vandrovcová, 2014, p. 149). Here, traditional

notions of the teacher, standing at the front of the class spewing knowledge at the students, is challenged and the power dynamic dismantled.

Bringing Nonhuman Animals Into the Conversation. To engage students in conversations about nonhuman animals, the authors suggest incorporating activities that "inspire inquisitiveness and reverence for life to complement discussions about exploitation under capitalism" (Corman & Vandrovcová, 2014, p. 150). In turn, students empathize with nonhuman animals and orient themselves towards positions of allyship with nonhuman animals.

Intersectionality of Oppressions. Through an intersectional analysis, as mentioned above, students uncover how "human and nonhuman oppression reinforce and complicate each other" (Corman & Vandrovcová, 2014, p. 151). By comprehending the interdependence of oppression, students and educators can collaborate to address root causes of issues, while also fostering a more equitable classroom atmosphere.

Working with Graphic Images. Graphic images are important, but the questions of when to show them and how to effectively discuss their relevance are challenging. Corman and Vandrovcová (2014) suggest opportunities for discussion on thoughts and feelings about the graphic images. Moreover, they encourage educators to contemplate offering short breaks to students during the viewing of graphic images, followed by opportunities for small group discussions prior to engaging in a larger group discourse.

Incorporating Activism. Corman and Vandrovcová (2014) assert the importance of making a variety of activism opportunities and information on different advocates available to students on a local and international scale. As a foundational component of CAS, the authors demonstrate "the need to pay close attention to grassroots voices regarding what issues are most urgent and what will produce positive gains" (p. 153). Alsop and Bencze (2010), in their editorial

"Introduction to the Special Issue on Activism: SMT Education in the Claws of Hegemon," extend this definition and argument by contending that activism provides valuable educational opportunities characterized by diverse experiences, active participation, and empowerment, allowing students, educators, and researchers to collaboratively understand and influence their world: "Education, even in the most variegated and imaginative forms, should not lose sight of this opportunity and the associated possibility of being part of a growing coalition with something important and significant to say about/for the future" (p. 181). The transformative potential of activism, particularly in education, highlights the significance of providing students with diverse advocacy opportunities and empowering them to address global issues. This approach nurtures informed voices capable of effecting positive change in shaping the future.

While the strategies outlined above are tailored to implementation in a postsecondary CAS pedagogy, I have referenced them as they can be modified and expanded to align with the scope of a K–12 pedagogy.

Studies on Children's Orientation Towards Nonhuman Animals

The salient role nonhuman animals play in children's lives within contemporary Western society is irrefutable (Serpell, 1999, p. 87). In mainstream households, from even before the moment children are born, representations of nonhuman animals are commonly found in every corner of the nursery, on bookshelves, and on clothing (Serpell, 1999, p. 87). Children's activities, songs, and television shows are filled with cartoon renditions of nonhuman animals. Real nonhuman animals are also significant figures within the child's world: children enjoy zoos, aquariums, museums, pets, and even realistic renditions via different media platforms (Serpell, 1999, p. 87).

Russell's (2013) dissertation research reports that young participants, between the ages of 6 and 12, felt empathy for nonhuman animals, both farm animals and pets, depicted within fiction (p. 268). However, the child's relationship with nonhuman animals changes because, as mentioned above, education teaches and normalizes anthropocentric reasoning. Bone (2013), citing Potts (2012), explains, "Young children may come to know the animal in terms of economic return rather than as a support to wellbeing or as a sentient creature" (p. 59). In a story on an industry website concerning the Ontario educational television network TVO's recent partnership with Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO), DFO's CEO volunteered that, because of Covid-19, "our educators were no longer permitted in the classroom and as a result we had to move quickly to develop and implement dairy education on a digital platform" (Smith, 2020). The quote suggests that now, more than ever, industry propaganda is helping to shape childrens' ideas about animals "in terms of economic return" (Smith, 2020).

Descriptions of Animals in Picture Books

In this section, I review literature that reports on ways in which the language, the images, and the anthropomorphization of nonhuman animals in children's picture books influence the relationship between the two life forms.

Waxman et al. (2014) note that picture books are often read to children because they are commonly held as "gateways for learning" (p. 1). As "cultural products" (p. 2), they "serve as sources of social engagement for children with adults in their close communities" (p. 1). The authors suggest that the learning that occurs is a direct reflection of "the orientations of their creators" that in turns affects "the orientations adopted by their viewers" (p. 2). Picture books are sources of information for children about entities with which they "have little opportunity to interact directly" (Geerdts, 2016, p. 11). Bone (2013) maintains that animals are included in

children's literature to teach "only what keeps adults comfortable" (p. 58) and that which "reflects the values that are attached to animals" (p. 58). The author continues, citing Oliver (2009): nonhuman animals are used as a conduit to maintain the status quo (p. 58) by "promoting human superiority" (pp. 61–62).

Anthropocentric reasoning, according to Geerdts (2016), is common in younger children: "In other words, they use humans as a prototypical species and extend biological properties based on behavioral similarity to humans" (p. 11, citing Carey, 1985, 1995). Further, Geerdts's (2016) research also reports that "anthropomorphism increases both anthropocentric and anthropomorphic reasoning" (p. 12). Adults and teachers often use anthropomorphism to "engage children in learning about animals" (Geerdts, 2016, p. 11). Anthropocentric reasoning, then, is metastasized through this cycle of using anthropomorphism to inspire interest in nonhuman animals in order to promote conceptual understanding of nonhuman animals as a means to human needs and satisfaction. Geerdts's (2016) literature review suggests that this cycle is difficult to escape: "Although teachers explicitly stated that anthropomorphism is misleading and inappropriate for instruction about animals, in analyses of written lesson plans and observations of classroom interactions, nearly every teacher used anthropomorphic language" (p. 11).

Ganea et al.'s (2014) study found that books which anthropomorphized nonhuman animals affected their preschool participants' "conceptions of animals" (p. 7). After hearing fantastical stories that used anthropomorphic language about unfamiliar animals, the preschoolers "were more likely to extend both human physical behaviours and emotions when asked about those real animals" (p. 7). Their conceptions were influenced more by the language of the book than by the illustrations: "Even when seeing realistic images of the animals and their

environment, if the language used to describe them was animistic, children were more likely to attribute anthropomorphic traits when asked questions about the real animals compared to children who heard realistic language" (p. 7). The researchers concluded that introducing children to stories that accurately described the animals and their environments and mannerisms would be the most effective way to help them learn new facts about animals (p. 8).

Although many children's books include or are about animals, "they seldom feature farm animals or the rights of animals" (Bone, 2013, p. 58). In an analysis of over a thousand children's picture books, Geerdts's (2016) research reveals that approximately 50% featured animals but only a quarter of those were "situated in a natural setting" (p. 11). Even when the stories occurred in natural settings, "the animals were often imbued with human-specific behavioral properties, such as talking, living in houses, or going to school" (p. 11, citing Marriott, 2002). Further, citing McCrindle and Odendaal (1994), Geerdts's (2016) recounting of a study that analyzed the books borrowed from a preschool library detailed that the most commonly borrowed books and 59% of all books featured anthropomorphic nonhuman animals (p. 11). Even books about biological properties of nonhuman animals, such as "contagion, biological inheritance, [and] camouflage[,] often used anthropomorphic language and pictures" (Geerdts, 2016, p. 12, citing Geerdts, 2014). Even with older children, aged 5 to 12, Geerdts's (2016) research indicated that anthropomorphic language was included in the summaries of stories (p. 12). As a result, the research indicated that in children aged 3–5, when stories included anthropomorphic images and language, their ability to retain information about the animals themselves decreased (Geerdts, 2016).

On the other hand, Geerdts (2016) reported that the benefit of anthropomorphic stories rested in their ability to build connections between nonhuman animals and humans, and from

that concluded that "personification as a constrained person analogy can generate predictions about unfamiliar animal behavior adaptively, supporting the construction of more elaborate biological theories about animals" (p. 13). The research is conflictual, however, regardless of whether the personification of nonhuman animals in children's texts does or does not lead to a fuller understanding of the importance of humans' overall relationship with them. Bone (2013), reviewing Melson (2001), reported that nondomesticated "animals did not have the same status as a pet who may become a much loved part of the family" (p. 60) and concluded that the anthropomorphization of animals creates a disconnect between the animal as a pet and an animal outside the home. Lloro-Bidart and Russell (2017) also argue that only when teachers engage with the political aspects of learning about nonhuman animals, such as animal treatment, can students "emerge with a greater sense of responsibility for caring for other animals" (p. 47).

Waxman et al.'s (2014) study deduced: "5-year-old children's sensitivity to the representations of non-human animals in children's books is keen enough to influence their reasoning" (p. 6). What is shared with children, then, and what is shown to them in stories is crucial to their conceptualizations of nonhuman animals and the ways in which they understand their purpose. The researchers also found that Indigenous-authored books included illustrations that "rarely if ever depicted animals wearing or surrounded by human artifacts, in sharp contrast to the heavily anthropomorphized non-Native books" (p. 2). The study concluded that the anthropomorphizing of nonhuman animals in children's stories did not promote learning about the biological world (p. 6). Instead, the anthropomorphic language in picture books served to normalize and further the economic and political interests of oligarchies of influence in the Western world.

The preceding review of research on children's stories notwithstanding, there remains a paucity of studies on the relation between primary-level curriculum in Ontario and students' perceptions of the value and significance of nonhuman animals. The studies I have reviewed here have highlighted the values embedded within published children's literature featuring animals without addressing the influence of the formal primary-level curriculum in children's literature on students' formative conceptions of the worth and value of nonhuman animals.

Indigenous Knowledges and Stories: A Response to Fostering Human-Animal Relationships and Language Learning

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of Indigenous knowledges and stories in the areas of education and climate change. Indigenous cultures around the world have long held deep connections with the natural world, viewing animals not just as resources but as kin with whom they share complex relationships and knowledge systems. This section of the literature review explores how Indigenous knowledges and stories serve as a vital response to contemporary challenges in language learning and the cultivation of meaningful connections between humans and animals. First, I review a text that uses Indigenous knowledges to introduce activities which centre the animal and encourage students to understand their role in protecting the environment. Then I explore a grammar that would change the way in which we refer to animals: Instead of referring to them as objects, we would refer to them as beings. Overall, this part of the literature review aims to shed light on the profound knowledge and practices embedded within Indigenous cultures, which offer valuable insights for educational practices and environmental stewardship in today's globalized world.

Using Indigenous Knowledges in the Classroom to Learn about Nonhuman Animals

Stewart (2010) maintains that Indigenous knowledge is hard to define because it is diverse, multilayered, and nonlinear (p. 252). Agrawal (1995), citing Warren (1991, p. 1), describes Indigenous knowledge is local knowledge unique to each community, shared orally throughout each generation, which becomes the basis for decision-making (p. 415). Magni (2017) asserts that all the diverse forms of knowledge are "deeply rooted in their relationship with the environment and social cohesion" (p. 438), which Agrawal (2002) attributes to the West's newfound interest (p. 287) in Indigenous knowledge.

Sharma (2010), citing Glasson (2010) and echoing Foucault's notion of subjugated knowledge, alludes to "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as in inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity" (p. 82). Sharma asserts that "the validation of Indigenous knowledge has been marginalized through the imposition of western … curriculum" (p. 162). Nonetheless, I argue that through the integration of Indigenous knowledge within the curriculum, students would be encouraged to explore human-animal relationships. Caduto and Bruchac's (1997) text *Keepers of the Animals: Native American Stories and Wildlife Activities for Children* is an example of a cross-curricular resource educators could use to introduce Indigenous knowledge into their classroom. The authors explain that the stories and activities within the collection are a way to "promote an understanding of, appreciation for, empathy with and responsible stewardship towards all animals on Earth, including human beings" (p. xvii). To foster this holistic perspective for the planet, the authors require children to be at the centre of their own learning encounters (p. xvii):

> Tell children a story and they listen with their whole beings.… Have them listen to and look at a cricket: feel it, study the way it lives, how it creates its songs and what that song communicates to other crickets. Help them to understand how the cricket is part of a field or vacant lot community of plants, animals, rocks, soil and water—all fueled by the plant growing energy of the sun. Visit places where people have affected the cricket's home to help children appreciate their stewardship role in the world and how all things are intertwined.… Build on these experiences with activities that help them to care for, and to take care of, the animals and other human beings so that they may develop a wildlife conservation ethic. (p. xvii)

Caduto and Bruchac's (1997) perspective brings awareness to the interconnectedness of humans and nonhuman animals and, in turn, embodies all three frameworks of citizenship education, as proposed by Westheimer and Kahne (2004), needed to create an equitable future for all beings sharing the same planet. Students learn to become personally responsible citizens by understanding their stewardship roles and actively engaging with them. They develop as participatory citizens by creating or cocreating activities that contribute to the well-being of crickets. They evolve into justice-oriented citizens by recognizing the interconnectedness of their lives with those of crickets and the broader environment, asking questions and acting in ways that honour and respect all forms of life.

Robin Kimmerer (2017), an Indigenous scholar and educator, chronicles her learning journey of the Potawatomi language and in so doing critiques the limitations of the English language. She asserts that in English, a "noun-based language" (p. 130) where you are either a human or a thing, "our grammar boxes us in by the choice of reducing a nonhuman being to an *it*, or it must be gendered, inappropriately, as a *he* or a *she*" (p. 132). The grammar of the English

language produces binaries between nonhuman and human. Kimmerer (2017) questions, "Where are our words for the simple existence of another living being? Where is our *yawe*?" (p. 132). The term *yawe* is used to refer to "those possessed with life and spirit" (p. 132) in Potawatomi. In response to the contrast created between nonhuman and human, Kimmerer (2017) proposes using a grammar of animacy.

A grammar of animacy would encapsulate language that acknowledges a being's selfhood and kinship. Kimmerer (2017) explains,

> Imagine seeing your grandmother standing at the stove in her apron and then saying of her, "Look, it is making soup. It has gray hair." We might snicker at such a mistake, but we also recoil from it. In English, we never refer to a member of our family, or indeed to any person, as it. That would be a profound act of disrespect.… So it is that in Potawatomi and most other Indigenous languages, we use the same words to address the living world as we use for our family. Because they are family. (p. 131)

In her argument, the grammar of animacy reminds us of our interconnectedness with all beings and their worthiness. In contrast, Kimmerer (2017) describes the grammar of the English language as arrogant, where only humans are "worthy of respect and moral concern" (p. 133). Kimmerer suggests that, in practice, a grammar of animacy is possible because it is a language we already know (p. 133). She illustrates this principle through the use of language in children:

> Our toddlers speak of plants and animals as if they were people, extending to them self and intention and compassion—until we teach them not to. We quickly retrain them and make them forget. When we tell them that the tree is not a who, but an it, we make that maple an object, we put a barrier between us, absolving ourselves of moral responsibility and opening the door to exploitation. Saying "it" makes a living land into "natural

> resources." If a maple is an it, we can take up the chainsaw. If a maple is a her, we think twice. (p. 133)

Further, in practising a grammar of animacy with her students, Kimmerer (2017) details an adoption of a kind of bilingualism hovering "between the lexicon of science and the grammar of animacy" (p. 132), where the scientific names and roles of plants are taught but so is their value (p. 132). Kimmerer concludes her argument by considering the purpose of grammar and suggests that it may reflect our relationships with one another. The grammar of animacy, then, contains the potential to transform our way of life into an oppression-free, harmonious "democracy of species" (p. 133).

Chapter Summary

This overview of relevant literature reveals insights and identifies gaps in the scholarship at the intersection of CAS and formal education. The research elucidated communication patterns in nonhuman animals; the use of animals as food, revenue, and entertainment in the Western world; the ways in which stories orient children's attitudes towards nonhuman animals; and Indigenous knowledges as a vehicle to reconceptualize the human-animal relationship. In the next chapter, I will share how I integrated important concepts from the literatures reviewed thus far in my dissertation to fashion a methodology for studying the impacts policy has on fostering human-animal relationships and developing an action-oriented pedagogic agenda.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Overview

In this dissertation, I reveal how certain discriminatory practices that uphold a hierarchical structure between humans and nonhuman animals are endorsed and perpetuated within different Ontario curriculum standards. These standards are crafted by influential policymakers who advance the neoliberal capitalist agenda. Additionally, I shed light on the perspectives held by both students and teachers regarding these issues and entertain potential avenues for constructive intervention. To guide my investigation, I employ the following three questions as tools for exploration:

- How does the discursive content of the Ontario language, social studies, and environmental education curriculum orient students' perceptions of nonhuman animals and their relations with humans?
- How can critical animal studies serve as a tool to disentangle anthropocentric pedagogies, thus helping students question and actively engage with issues so that they can explore their citizenship responsibilities in relation to nonhuman animals?
- What pedagogic approaches have potential for providing a more enlightened perspective on understanding and valuing nonhuman animals?

There were two main phases to my dissertation study: Phase 1: curriculum analysis; Phase 2: collaborative action research (CAR), consisting of participant life history interviews coupled with a lesson design exercise, and critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the data collected.

Curriculum Analysis

To support this phase of my project, involving analysis of the Grade 6 and 8 Ontario Language and Social Studies curriculum, I use critical discourse analysis as a working method. This approach draws from Martin Heidegger's understanding of language through hermeneutic phenomenology and, predominantly, van Dijk's (1993a, 1993b, 2001) work in CDA. While I rely heavily on van Dijk's understanding of power and dominance through discourse and privilege his working methods, I also integrate ideas from other CDA scholars, including Gee (2014, 2015), Fairclough (2001), Wodak (2001, 2014), Meyer (2001), Wodak and Meyer (2009), and Kiyunja and Kuyini (2017).

Heideggerian Hermeneutic Phenomenology

I have chosen to use Heidegger's method because of the attention and respect this theoretical orientation pays to the importance of language in shaping how citizens and, for purposes of this project, future citizens view nonhuman animals and the perspectives they adopt in terms of empathy and care. Specifically, this framework considers the ways in which different layers of interpretation and history shape language, and how that impacts our relation to nonhuman animals.

Martin Heidegger studied under "the founding father of phenomenology" (Rapport, 2005, p. 126), Edmund Husserl, at the University of Freiburg. Eventually he would rebel against Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and its ability to "elucidate objects of consciousness for us" and develop his own phenomenological philosophy "concentrated on modes of being" (Rapport, 2005, p. 126).

Heidegger (1927/1962) explores *Being* and "the question of the meaning of Being" (p. 19) in *Being in Time*. Here Heidegger asserts, "A dogma has been developed which not only

declares the question about the meaning of Being to be superfluous, but sanctions its complete neglect" (p. 21). The meaning is both indefinable and understood by all: "Something obscure and hidden has taken on a clarity and self-evidence such that if anyone continues to ask about it he is charged with an error of method" (p. 21). However, for Heidegger, "questioning is the piety of thought" (Heidegger, 1947/1977, p. 35), and he thus continues to probe at the question of Being. According to Heidegger (1927/1962),

> Being is always the Being of an entity.… Thus to work out the question of Being adequately, we must make an entity—the inquirer—transparent in his own Being. The very asking of this question is an entity's mode of Being; and as such it gets its essential character from what is inquired about namely, Being. This entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term "Dasein". (p. 27)

Dasein, "there-being" (Goulding, 2004, p. 122) is existence: "a being's coming forth and standing out by itself, presenting by itself" (Heidegger, 1999, p. 209). Heidegger (1999) breaks down the word *dasein* into *da* and *sein*: "Da-sein [is] the inabiding carriability of the clearing, i.e., of the free, unprotected, belongings of the t/here [*Da*], in which be-ing is sheltered and concealed" (p. 210). Further, Goulding (2021), explains,

world

↑

man (←E→) gods (t/there [*Da*])

↓

Earth

> From the above diagram, we see the "E" for encleavage (*Erklüftung*) as the midpoint of the world-earth and man-gods axes. The encleavage is the "truth-ground" of the event (*Ereignis*) (Heidegger 1999, 218). *Da-sein* unfolds at this central midpoint as the diagram illustrates. An encleavage is an enfolding unto itself. The ontological difference is a "scission" between Being and beings that link each to the other by "cleaving" them into two (see Richardson 1974, 579). As such, *Da-sein* is "the truth of being" as Heidegger says. (p. 377)

The clearing in the centre of this diagram is a place for the truth of events and unconcealment of existence (Diep, 2017, p. 81). Here, the "dissolution of the boundaries" (Goulding, 2004, p. 22) that distorts or influences truth allows for Being. Goulding (2004) describes this place (*Lichtung*) as "the between, the Void, the opening … a 'place' between subject and object.… In and through 'it' (Being), beings emerge" (p. 22). However, both Heidegger (1947/1977) and Goulding (2004) affirm the central role that language holds in Being.

Heidegger (1947/1977) asserts that "Language is the house of being" (p. 239), while Goulding (2004) maintains that language "provides the conditions and possibilities of Being" (p. 22). Goulding (2021), citing Heidegger's *Being and Time*, explains: "Words are receptacles of being and becoming that "embody" Heidegger's "clearing" (*die Lichtung*) where "the opening is not only free for brightness and darkness, but also for resonance and echo, for sounding and diminishing of sound. The clearing is the open for everything that is present and absent" (p. 382). Words convey meaning; however, context and the implicit influences guiding our interpretation can distort meaning or narrow understanding. Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology demands a suspension of assumptions while concentrating on "stripping back layers of

perception" (Goulding, 2004, p. 1). It is only through this process that the dissolution of boundaries is possible.

To begin removing layers of perception, one must find a word's original meaning. Then, the distortion of meaning can be traced and linked to various historical events. Goulding (2004) explains,

> An etymological analysis is important because it helps suspend our modern version of the world while re-awakening ancient possibilities by bringing things that are far away close to hand and vice versa. In the reverberations of near and far, we sense the intricate layerings of historical understanding as time doubles back into our being. (p. 119)

Like the clearing at the centre of the diagram, an etymological analysis of a word reveals its true meaning while concealing the many layers of influence that have altered the interpretation of its meaning.

Goulding (2004) performs the following excavation of the words *hermeneutics* and *phenomenology*:

> To begin with, the Chinese characters for "hermeneutics" are *quanshixue*. *Quan* suggests explaining or expounding, the truth or core of something, the weighing or assessment, to arrange in order. *Shi* suggests interpreting or explaining, setting free or relieving. *Quanshi* is interpreting, annotating or making explanatory notes; and the study of such is *xue*. Hence, hermeneutics is the study or interpretation or expounding or setting free or relieving of the truth of something. This is comparable to Heidegger's idea of hermeneutics as an interrogation of Being, the Greek messenger god Hermes bringing the "truth" from Mount Olympus in the ancient Greek mythological world. The Chinese characters for "phenomenon" also tell a tale. *Xianxiang* suggests the bringing to shape or

> representation of the present, the manifestation of appearance through the present. Hence, the Chinese term for phenomenology becomes *xianxiang xue*, the "study of phenomenon." Together, hermeneutic phenomenology is a two-fold practice: the hermeneutic quest for truth and the phenomenological method of bringing shape to the ontological through the ontic. (p. 119)

Hermeneutics involves "the interpretative quest for truth" (Goulding, 2004, p. 117), while phenomenology involves "the context of the life-world in which we live" (p. 117). To reiterate, the practice of hermeneutic phenomenology is to "unconceal" (Wrathall, 1999) what the Being of a particular being can do. Overall, the focus of this frame "is towards illuminating details and seemingly trivial aspects within experience that may be taken for granted in our lives, with a goal of creating meaning and achieving a sense of understanding" (Laverty, 2003, p. 24). This framework demands questioning which will make the familiar unfamiliar by marking what happened before us, be-fore us. The past and what has been forgotten is brought into focus and made relevant again. Through an etymological analysis of select words used in the Ontario curriculum documents, this exploration reveals the embedded anthroparchal cultural messages and unconceals their ties to intrahuman hierarchies.

Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysis is interested in the relationship between discourse and the reproduction of dominance and inequality (van Dijk, 1993a). It aims to make sense of the often hidden relationship between language and social processes (Fairclough, 2001; Gee, 2014; Wodak, 2001) through "the systematic and retroductable investigation of semiotic data (written, spoken or visual)" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 3). In addition, CDA unveils the often hidden interconnectedness in "power *abuse*, that is, in breaches of laws, rules and principles of

democracy, equality and justice, by those who wield power" (van Dijk, 1993a, p. 255). Ultimately, the findings aim to inspire change and catapult interventions addressed at oppressive hierarchies of power.

For the purposes of this project I use the following definition proposed by van Dijk (2001):

> CDA is a—critical—perspective on doing scholarship: it is, so to speak, discourse analysis 'with an attitude'. It focuses on social problems, especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination. Wherever possible, it does so from a perspective that is consistent with the best interests of dominated groups. It takes the experiences and opinions of members of such groups seriously, and supports their struggle against inequality. That is, CDA research combines what perhaps somewhat pompously used to be called 'solidarity with the oppressed' with an attitude of opposition and dissent against those who abuse text and talk in order to establish, confirm or legitimate their abuse of power. (p. 96)

Based on this definition, language, through the lens of CDA, is inextricably tied to power. This said, the context or situation in which the language exists becomes crucial in revealing the relation between language and the use of power by dominant groups. Gee (2014) describes language as having magical properties because "we fit our language to a situation or context that our language, in turn, helped to create in the first place" (p. 11). In short, language is used to fit the context and at the same time creates that context. Our world then, is continuously built and rebuilt through language (Gee, 2014, p. 11). As a result, to make sense of language "it is necessary to understand the ways in which language is embedded in society and social institutions (such as families and schools)" (Gee, 2015, p. 115).

My research locates itself within a critical paradigm which is integral to examining and challenging power structures that perpetuate oppression. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) summarize research in the critical paradigm as "seek[ing] to address the political, social and economic issues, which lead to social oppression, conflict, struggle and power structures" (p. 35). In this project, the relationship between discourse and power, in the form of speciesism, is central to the understanding of how oppressive hierarchies of power are reproduced.

CDA and Power

Van Dijk (1993a) asserts that understanding the relationship between social power and dominance is crucial for CDA (p. 254). For van Dijk (1993a), power is equated with control that pertains to "*action* and *cognition*: that is, a powerful group may limit the freedom of actions of others, but also influence their minds" (p. 254). While controlling action "as in police violence against demonstrators" is clear, cognitive power is "enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to *change the mind of others in one's own interests*" (van Dijk, 1993a, p. 254). This form of power and dominance is often "*organized* and *institutionalized* … supported or condoned by other group members, sanctioned by the courts, legitimated by laws, enforced by the police, and ideologically sustained and reproduced by the media or textbooks" (van Dijk, 1993a, p. 256). The power held by members of these elite groups is so great that their interests are embedded within governing documents and instantiated as normal within society.

Power, then, is socially, politically, and culturally organized into a hierarchy where members of particular groups "have a special role in planning, decision-making and control over the relations and processes of the enactment of power" (van Dijk, 1993a, p. 255). For these elite groups, power is measured by their access to discourse: "The more discourse genres, contexts,

participants, audience, scope and text characteristics they (may) actively control or influence, the more powerful" (van Dijk, 1993a, p. 256). The same is true for the inverse: those excluded from the inner circles of powerful elites also lack access to discourse (van Dijk, 1993a, p. 256). In sum, indirectly, "through the influence of discourses on the minds of others" and "through the enactment of dominance in text and talk in specific contexts, … discourse is involved in dominance" (van Dijk, 1993a, p. 279). First, "dominant speakers control the access to public discourse and hence are able to indirectly manage the public mind. They do so by making use of those structures and strategies that manipulate the mental models of the audience in such a way that 'preferred' social cognitions tend to be developed" (van Dijk, 1993a, pp. 279–280). Second, "dominant speakers may effectively limit the 'communicative rights' of others, e.g. by restricting (free access to) communicative events, speech acts, discourse genres, participants, topics of style" (van Dijk, 1993a, p. 279).

Power and Social Cognition. Social cognition for van Dijk (1993b) is a socially shared understanding of "norms, values and ideologies" (p. 123). This, then, dictates social action and all interactions because it "underlie[s] the social and cultural organization of society as a whole (Resnick et al., 1991)" (van Dijk, 1993a, p. 257). Van Dijk (1993a), therefore, argues that "social cognitions allow us to link dominance and discourse [because] they explain the production as well as the understanding and influence of dominant text and talk" (p. 257). Social cognition creates the context (or phenomenology in Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology) through which knowledge and understanding is created and controlled. This project focuses on the cognitive power, organized and institutionalized through Ontario's education system, used to embed speciesist ideologies within the language and social studies curriculum. With power over the discourse implemented within Ontario schools, powerful elite groups and organizations

continue to control knowledge and influence thinking through the mandated curriculum. Power and dominance are constantly reproduced through discourse: discourse structures are tied to social cognition, and social cognition to social structures (van Dijk, 1993a, p. 280).

CDA's Method

The method of CDA lies within the hermeneutic tradition because it "strongly relies on linguistic categories" (Meyer, 2001, p. 25). Meyer expands: "This does not mean that topics and contents play no role at all, but that the core operationalizations depend on linguistic concepts such as actors, mode, time, tense, argumentation, and so on. Nevertheless a definitive list of the linguistic devices relevant for CDA cannot be given, since their selection mainly depends on specific research questions" (p. 25). These research questions first require each study to conduct a "thorough theoretical analysis of a social issue … so as to be able to select which discourse and social structures to analyse and to relate" (van Dijk, 2001, p. 98).

Data Collection and CDA

The specific curriculum and policy documents reviewed for the purposes of this study are: *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Language, 2006* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006); *The Ontario Curriculum: Social Studies, Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography, Grades 7 and 8, 2018* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018); *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8 and* The Kindergarten Program*: Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017a); *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow* (Government of Ontario, 2009); *Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Futur*e (Government of Ontario, Working Group on Environmental Education, 2007); *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (Ontario Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Education Office, 2007); and *Paying Attention to Literacy, K–12* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b). These materials

stipulate the overall and specific curriculum expectations for the subject and grade level, and are found online though the Ontario Ministry of Education website.

Data collection and analysis within CDA are recursive (Meyer, 2001; Strauss, 1987). That is, rather than a step needed to be completed prior to analysis, "data collection is never completely excluded, and new questions always arise which can only be dealt with if new data are collected or earlier data are re-examined" (Strauss, 1987, pp. 23–24). Using my prior knowledge of the curriculum documents as a starting point, I narrowed my search based on relevant subjects. For example, I knew the French language curriculum would not be useful, so I focused on documents that mentioned nonhumans in any capacity. I also searched for expectations that could be extended to include nonhuman animals, such as sustainability, citizenship, climate change, and future building. This investigation revealed a lack of inclusion of nonhuman animals in the curriculum beyond their commodification. I closely read the texts for language patterns, with particular attention to the representation and categorization of certain groups. After contemplating the nuances of the language, I evaluated how the language of the texts worked to purport certain embedded ideologies. These embedded ideologies illuminated a set of social hierarchies and a system of power dynamics, privileging ideological positions which benefited those in power and omitting or discrediting marginalized perspectives.

This realization highlighted the importance of the language curriculum and language learning as a foundation for the ways in which students engage with nonhuman animals within the classroom in speech, literature, and media. I then evaluated how the language within these texts contributed to influencing public perspectives and maintaining existing power structures, in order to uncover possibilities within the text for social change through actor agency. For instance, expectations related to sustainability provided educators with sufficient flexibility to

develop a curriculum that incorporates nonhuman animal life. I then consulted the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (Ontario Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Education Office, 2007) to explore the ways in which Ontario policymakers use (or could use) Indigenous knowledge and ideologies as a way to value nonhuman animal life.

Collaborative Action Research (CAR)

In the second phase of the study, I conducted interviews with teachers and students that focused on participants' stances towards the relation between human and nonhuman animals and the intermediate (Grades 6–8) Ontario language and social studies curriculum. Towards the end of the interviews, I collaborated with participants in brainstorming potential lessons aimed at centring nonhuman animals and nurturing a robust human-animal relationship. Through this engagement in CAR, I aimed to cultivate a deeper appreciation for animal life and foster empathy and understanding towards nonhuman beings. Below I elucidate my data collection strategies for Phase 2.

Participant Recruitment

Participants were chosen using the principle of exponential discriminative snowball sampling (Etikan et al., 2016). Through this technique, participants may refer the researcher to other appropriate individuals. The benefit of implementing this technique is the likely identification of members of a specific population with particular characteristics. A case in point: to obtain participants for my project, I relied on a personal network of educators that originated from a Toronto-based conference for educators who are interested in incorporating animal studies within their pedagogy, in conjunction with my own experience and network from working in the field of education. The selection criteria included individuals who self-identified as having an interest in animals and either taught intermediate grades or were in an intermediate

grade. The interest in animals was intentionally unrestrictive, as I aimed to explore the various ways in which humans consider themselves interested in animals and what this implies for hierarchical relationships between species. The grade range restriction reflected the parts of the curriculum that I viewed as having the most opportunity for inclusion and exploration of nonhuman animal life. The educators were selected first, and then they referred me to students with similar interests.

I interviewed two teachers and two students affiliated with two Ontario Catholic school boards. At the time of the interviews, each of the teacher participants had a long-term occasional contract or was in a permanent placement to teach junior/intermediate grades. The selected student participants were in either Grade 6 or 8. It is important to note that they were not part of the classrooms of the teachers interviewed.

Site and Participants

Both teachers interviewed for this study worked for school boards within the Greater Toronto Area, and the students interviewed attended schools within the Greater Toronto Area. At the time the research data were gathered, Covid-19 protocols were followed and stay-at-home measures were in place.

Because of the global pandemic, schools were operating remotely. In light of the intended date of my dissertation defence, classroom observation—which first requires clearance from the school board—was no longer a possibility. Initially, I hoped to collect observational data, but because of Covid-19 I was not able to. Instead, I worked around this imposed restriction by relying on in-depth life history interviewing to glean an answer to the question: *What is going on here with regard to the teaching and learning of dispositions towards nonhuman animals*? I used the life history information collected from in-depth interviews to address my research questions.

In Chapter 5, I provide demographic information for the two teacher and two student participants. I write up the findings of each participant in the form of a case study in the interest of creating a narrative that is relatable and that facilitates the reader's own interpretation of the data. For the sake of transparency, I note here that I began with a greater number of participants, initially four teachers and four students. However, two teachers and two students withdrew from the study. I subsequently made a decision to restrict my focus for the dissertation to the four remaining participants since this grouping represented all the patterns represented in the data thus far.

Pseudonyms have been given to participants to protect their identity and safeguard any confidential information that may have been divulged during this research study.

Data Collection Strategies

For the purposes of Phase 2 of the dissertation research, I interviewed two adult junior/intermediate teachers and two students, one in Grade 6 (11–12 years old) and one in Grade 8 (13–14 years old). Both students and teachers were interviewed once for approximately 60 minutes. At the end of each interview, the participant—student or teacher—was asked to design a lesson on animal welfare they thought would be effective within their classroom. To assist in this process, participants were allocated time to talk through their ideas with the researcher and explain the rationales behind their choices.

All interviews had to adhere to the restrictions imposed because of the pandemic. I contacted each participant via written communication to introduce myself and give a very short introduction to the study. Within each communication, I included times and dates that could be rearranged to accommodate the participant's schedule where participants could ask questions about the study. Once the participants agreed to participate, they were given an informed consent

form that they then had to sign and return to me. Each of the four participants signed and returned the form the same day their interview was conducted.

The participants were interviewed individually and all sessions were audio recorded with their permission. I conducted interviews of the standard, sequenced variety (Schecter & Bayley, 2002), enabling both synchronic and diachronic analysis. The interviews had two parts: a life history portion and then a section on ideas for lessons that centred on nonhuman animals. Emphasis was placed on animal welfare rather than animal rights, as I was unfamiliar with the specific ways in which the participants were interested in nonhuman animal life. By emphasizing animal welfare, I aimed to capture a broader range of perspectives and avoid potentially alienating participants who might find the more radical concept of animal rights jarring. This approach facilitated a more inclusive and open discussion about the participants' views and experiences related to nonhuman animals.

Moreover, the life history components informed the diachronic analysis, as the elicitations delved into participants' earliest engagements with various issues and their evolving relationships with nonhuman animals over time. In the latter part of the interview, I collaborated with participants to develop a future plan, including a lesson focused on animal welfare. The selection of teacher and student participants allowed for a comparative analysis of both (a) how teachers and students think about and interact with nonhuman animals in their daily lives, and (b) participants' responses to the CAR dimension of the study.

Life History Interview. I conducted life history interviews of the standard, sequenced variety (Schecter & Bayley, 2002)—that is, all participants were asked the same questions in the same order. At first, I asked a series of demographic and *what goes on in your daily life?* type questions that "allow[ed] for material to emerge naturally as the participant talks," while I used

"neutral probes to steer the flow of information towards the topic" (Bauman & Adair, 1992, p. 13). I began with the kinds of questions—e.g., about family history—that allow for rapport building and foster a harmonious free flow of information as trust develops (Spradley, 1979, p. 44). The interviews aimed to collect: (a) unfiltered data from the participant's personal and cultural context (Bauman & Adair, 1992, p. 13); (b) descriptive data on everyday experiences that, mimic "the larger ethnographic experience of actually *being* there" (Bauman & Adair, 1992, p. 13); (c) "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) related to participants' viewpoints that suffice to render an emic position; and (d) the language of the participant—used as a tool to understand their individual construction of reality (Spradley, 1979). Questions elicited information on participants' perceptions of and orientations to nonhuman animals, their relationship with nonhuman animals, and the role of nonhuman animals in human lives. In these speech events, I paid special attention to key moments and events associated with responses to changes and challenges to mandated curriculum expectations.

A Collaborative Action Research Approach. While I introduced the study as a CAR initiative in Chapter 2, in this chapter I elucidate how participants actively engaged as agents in the processes that drive educational change. As explained in my discussion of the engaged policy and practices conceptual framework in Chapter 2, participants are viewed as themselves actors in instantiating policy at the micro level, drawing from their experiences to articulate the problem and shape project activities that address and modify the study's goals.

Following the life-history collection portion of the interviews, I collaborated with the participants to develop lessons focused on nonhuman animals. In these discussions, the participants were able to reflect on topics discussed earlier in the interviews such as the role of a responsible citizen, climate change, and animal welfare, and determine which would be directly

applicable to their own learning environments. Together, we identified goals for these lessons, aiming to foster deeper awareness and understanding among the participants of nonhuman animal welfare issues through the lessons created and seeking to address topics that would be most relevant towards that end. This collaborative approach ensured that the research was rooted in the participants' perspectives and actively engaged them in shaping educational materials that are directly applicable to their classrooms and understanding of nonhuman animal life.

Throughout Phase 2 of the study, I witnessed multiple examples of enacted agency on the part of participants. A case in point was when teacher participants admitted to interpreting the curriculum to fit their own pedagogical agenda. This acknowledgment underscores the proactive stance taken by participants, as they reflected the different ways in which they navigate and negotiate institutional frameworks to optimize their teaching practices in alignment with their beliefs and experience. Counterexamples exist as well, where teachers rationalized their lack of agency in the direction of a CAS agenda to an absence of emphasis in the Ontario curriculum. Such examples, detailed in Chapter 6, highlight the dynamic interplay between individual agency and institutional structures within the educational sphere, illuminating the multifaceted nature of educational change processes. As might be expected, student participants appeared less conflicted about their role in influencing the class curriculum, given that a leadership role in the area of lesson planning would not normally be an expectation held of students. This said, the agency of student participants was manifested in their development of educational activities aimed at reinforcing the concept that being a responsible citizen entails the protection and welfare of animals.

To organize the data collected from the interviews, I arranged my elicitations into six components, based on the preliminary findings of my analysis of the various Ontario curriculum

documents as well as informal conversations with students and professional educators during the recruitment process. The elicitations for student and teacher participants differ somewhat. The themes in the interview protocol curated for teachers (see Appendix B) are as follows: (a) personal and professional background; (b) pedagogical philosophy; (c) interspecies relationality; (d) citizenship values; (e) video response; and (f) applied implications. For student participants (see Appendix C) the themes are: (a) personal background; (b) learning at school; (c) interspecies relationality; (d) citizenship values; (e) video response; and (f) applied implications.

For both student and teacher participants, the first theme elicits information about their biographies. The questions inquire about demographic information and routine daily activities such as meal preparation and eating habits. The second theme, for teachers, investigates pedagogical practices and rationales for language and social studies lessons. The questions focus on the kinds of resources the teacher uses and call for an evaluation of the amount and nature of time allocated to different forms of assessments (oral, written, media-based). For students, the second theme entails elicitations about their understanding of the kinds of teaching and learning that goes on at school. Next, for the interspecies relationality theme, participants are asked to reflect on their knowledge of nonhuman animals, their first encounters with them, and their overall disposition. In contrast, the fourth theme invites participants to ponder what it means to be a good citizen and to consider the role and responsibility formal education has in preparing individuals to become citizens. The questions for the fifth theme elicit a response to a short 2-minute YouTube video shown during the interview. Participants are asked to reflect on what is going on in the video and to try to make sense of the events from their viewpoint. Finally, the sixth theme attempts to glean the willingness of participants to complete the design of the study

unit assigned and to integrate some of the themes raised in the lesson into their future teaching practices or learning applications.

Data Analysis

In this agenda, critical analysis allows me to analyze implicitly embedded messages about maintaining oppressive hierarchical systems, and collaborative action research allows me to analyze participants' perceptions and attitudes towards nonhuman animals and discern potential avenues to reconsider the value of nonhuman animal life. As explained earlier, the process of analyzing data in the first part of this research study, Phase 1, involves an amalgamation of principles of critical analysis and Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology**.** This approach has allowed me to critically analyze the ways in which layers of influence have manipulated language in order to benefit the species in power, that is, humans.

In Phase 2, the research activist component of this study, I conducted life-history interviews with two intermediate students (Grades 6–8) and two Grade 6 educators. The interviews were subsequently written as case studies, allowing for the contextualization of the data within broader themes and patterns. As explained, this approach highlights specific examples and stories that illustrate key points, thereby making the findings more relatable and easier to understand. Data were analyzed using grounded theory (Castellan, 2010; Miles et al., 2014) and intersectional analysis to interpret my research findings, showing, in particular, how the category of social consciousness intersects with the category of speciesism to maintain the oppression of nonhuman animals. According to Miles et al., grounded theory is

> the meshing of theorizing of data collection.… After some data collection and reflection in relation to a general issue of concern, the researcher generates "categories" which fit the data.… The researcher then attempts to formulate more general (and possibly more

> abstract) expressions of these categories, which will then be capable of embracing a wider range of objects. (p. 4)

My analysis involved a search for generalization and commonalities among multiple methods of data collection. As suggested by Miles et al. (2014) and elaborated by Schecter and Ippolito (2008), qualitative data analysis is ongoing and recursive. Castellan (2010) explains, "Data analysis is an ongoing, inductive process where data are sorted, sifted through, read and reread" (p. 7). I analyzed all of the participants' interviews, categorized the findings based on thematic overlaps and divergences, and compared them both within and across categories of teacher and student (Chapter 5). After comparing the thematic responses, I reexamined the data, including my discussions with participants over their design of a curriculum unit, using van Dijk's (1993a) CDA framework to identify the rationales provided by participants for their responses. As explained more fully in Chapter 6, I identified five discourses in both teacher and student responses. The choice to organize these rationales and dispositions into a five-tiered developmental scale reflects my philosophy regarding a hierarchy of consciousness across these dispositions.

In Phase 2, intersectional analysis, CDA, and grounded theory analysis work together to achieve methodological triangulation (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Jick, 1979). Intersectional analysis provides a framework for understanding how different institutions and social norms intersect with speciesism by considering the multiple dimensions of oppression. CDA works as a tool to uncover the different discourses, or moral arguments, that sustain these forms of oppression, while grounded theory analysis provides a way in which to organize and ultimately interpret different patterns, themes, and discourses within the data. Collectively, intersectional

analysis, CDA, and grounded theory analysis work to enrich the study's theoretical and empirical contributions.

Formal Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by York University's Human Participant Review Committee (HPRC). The HPRC concluded that the study posed no anticipated risks to participants. Participants were informed that they could terminate their participation at any time during the study. In the case of participant withdrawal, participants were guaranteed that all written submissions and audiorecordings would be destroyed and no longer used for any purpose. Prior to beginning the interview, all adult participants and student guardians signed a consent form (Appendices D and E).

Chapter Summary

In summary, I employed CDA throughout both phases of my research study—the analysis of curriculum documents and examination of the data from the collaborative action research component of the study. After completing a thorough review of the related literature and thematic analysis of my empirical data, I organized the arguments into a developmental scale and used it as a tool to arrange the various perspectives and rationales that participants held regarding the value and treatment of nonhuman animal life.

The onset of the global Covid-19 pandemic disrupted both my intended study site and the daily routines of my participants. Because of the restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic, I relied exclusively on interviews with carefully selected educators and students and not on onsite observations as originally planned. Nevertheless, because of the variety of resources I have summoned to investigate my research questions and the number of strategies I have deployed to triangulate my study findings, I am confident that my investigation produced

valuable insights on the educational zeitgeist within Ontario schools regarding orientations towards and treatment of nonhuman animals.

Chapter 5: Findings 1: Teacher and Student Case Studies

In this chapter, I report on the information gathered about teacher and student participants through qualitative research methods involving the use of a standardized, sequenced interview protocol. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have elaborated four case studies using data from the interviews with two teacher and two student participants. This chapter is divided into two sections: in the first section, I elaborate the two case studies of the teacher participants, and in the second I do the same with regard to the student participants.

The interview protocol was created with the intention of gathering insights into participants' daily interactions with nonhuman animals, their relationships with them, how they address the topic of nonhuman animals within educational settings, and their broader perspectives regarding nonhuman animals as sources of sustenance and as deserving rights. Following the interview, participants were invited to develop an original assignment centred around nonhuman animals, providing an opportunity to reveal their genuine perspectives on the subject. Here, I recount the communication processes and answers volunteered by participants interviewed for the purposes of this study.

Case Studies of Teachers

Ms. Miller: Biographic Overview

Ms. Miller possessed 3 years of teaching experience and was not under permanent employment with the school board where she was hired. The school board is Catholic and located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Her second long-term occasional position, spanning September to May, involved teaching a Grade 6 class and constituted her lengthiest contract to date. Residing with her mother and grandparents, Ms. Miller shares a household with three other individuals and does not own any pets. She is in a committed relationship but not married.

Ms. Davis: Biographic Overview

At the time of the interview, Ms. Davis had accumulated 3 years of teaching experience and had recently secured permanent status with her school board. Despite this status, Ms. Davis did not have a permanent school assignment, meaning she would be relocated the following year. However, she was assured of working at her current location for the full academic year from September to June. Ms. Davis resides with five individuals, including her mother, and shares her home with three pets: two cats and one dog. While she is in a committed relationship, Ms. Davis is not married.

Childhood Life

Despite unique experiences and upbringings among the teacher participants, the following common themes provide insight into shared aspects of the participants' childhood: outdoor activities, parental reading habits, children and pets, and family dynamic.

Outdoor Activities. Ms. Miller and Ms. Davis both detail spending time outdoors in their childhood. Ms. Miller was involved in soccer and spent time playing that sport, while also enjoying time with family at the beach or park. Ms. Davis accredits part of her time outdoors in childhood to walking their dog.

Family Literacy Practices. Neither of the participants recall their parents reading them stories about animals during childhood; however, Ms. Miller mentions that the lullabies she heard growing up were about animals.

Children and Pets. Neither of the participants has children; however, Ms. Davis makes mention of the students in her class when asked about children: "I don't have kids but my students are all like my children."

Dietary Preferences. Ms. Davis included her dietary preferences when asked about her childhood. She explained that she was influenced by her aunt to become vegetarian and did so in elementary school: “My aunt was vegetarian before I was born and we were very close when I was growing up. I actually started being vegetarian when I was in elementary school because I wanted to be like her.” Ms. Davis included herself, along with her mother, as primarily doing the cooking at home. She made note of special diets she has to attend to while cooking:

> My mom is pescatarian, like me and my sister. At dinner we usually make multiple meals.… A typical dinner looks like pasta with plain red sauce for me, my sister, and mom, and a meat sauce for my dad and brother. After pasta we will have green veggies, like broccoli, and a simple salad with breaded veal for the meat eaters. And bread, always bread.

Ms. Miller indicated that her mother managed the cooking and grocery shopping at her home. There are no dietary restrictions in Ms. Miller’s home and she described a typical dinner as “protein and carbohydrates. For example, stir fry rice with tofu and shrimp, or pasta with salmon.”

Work Life

Even though both women teach Grade 6, there are differences in class size, planning time, discussions with coworkers, and even their understanding of the seven different Catholic Graduate Expectations.

The Classrooms: Size, Subjects, and Planning Time. When interviewed, the participants both indicated that they taught language, math, science, social studies, art, drama, religion, family life, physical education, and health. Class size ranged between 17 and 28

students and the planning time for both teachers was 40 minutes and sometimes 80 minutes, depending on the class schedule.

Discussion of Curriculum with Coworkers. Both participants mentioned discussing curriculum with their colleagues with varying frequencies. Ms. Miller spoke more often about curriculum than about personal life with her coworkers. Ms. Davis described speaking about the curriculum with coworkers every day or every other day. Ms. Miller and Ms. Davis both alluded to the importance of collaborative planning.

Graduate Expectations. Ms. Miller and Ms. Davis responded to this elicitation in a similar manner by listing the Catholic Graduate Expectations outlined for their school board. Ms. Davis went further and explained that expectations for each grade and subject vary.

Pedagogy: Language and Social Science

Both participants expressed a shared interest in providing students with a holistic and interconnected understanding of the world, including the role of animals within it.

Hierarchy of Language Strands. Among the four language strands outlined in the curriculum document—reading, writing, oral communication, and media—both teachers listed first reading and then writing as the most important strands. Ms. Miller and Ms. Davis both selected media as the least important strand. Ms. Davis chuckled and postulated, “The least is probably media. I don’t think I know more than the kids in that area.” As the least important strand, media is the strand Ms. Miller and Ms. Davis spend the least amount of time on in terms of giving structured instructions and assessments. Both participants indicated that Grade 6 was an EQAO year and that the provincial exam did not focus heavily on media literacy, especially in comparison with reading and writing.

Animals in Language Lessons. Ms. Davis indicated that she often reads, listens to, or watches texts that feature animals in her language lessons. She professed that a majority of stories she found included animals in the storyline, but rarely as main characters and often with human qualities: “They are so minor ,but reading the *Harry Potter* book, yes the animals are given human qualities and are somewhere in the middle of main and secondary characters but definitely important.” Ms. Miller, in contrast, explained that she did not often read, watch, or listen to texts that featured animals with her class.

Animals in Social Science. When the teachers were asked if they were obligated to include animals within their lessons, as per the curriculum document, both participants said no. While Ms. Miller did not offer any further information, Ms. Davis qualified her answer. She stated that the overall expectations, the ones teachers had to satisfy, did not make any mention of animals: “I think in the specific expectations it does talk about animals vaguely but more about how if we don’t take care of our environment they will become extinct and that will impact our lives.”

However, both participants confirmed that they included animals in their conversations about climate change. Ms. Miller reported that many students in her class “own their own pets and therefore are able to connect and empathize with animals in our world and how they are impacted.” Ms. Davis spoke about how her personal bias influenced her pedagogy in this area:

> Yes, I think my own bias really comes into play here. I care about animals and living with my pets, I know that animals are a lot more like us than people think. I use the curriculum loosely and try to relate large issues to the kids. I don’t know that talking about how greenhouse gas emissions from driving a car resonates with them so I talk more about fast fashion and mass farming.

Ms. Davis's statement reflects an anthropomorphic perspective because she values nonhuman animals who possess similar characteristics to humans. It is also anthropocentric in that the nonhuman animal is only understood as valuable in relation to their connection to her, rather than having value in itself. Ms Davis tailors her pedagogy to address human-centric issues and perceived relevance to human life in order for her lessons to resonate with her students. In doing so, Ms. Davis contributes to the anthroparchal messaging that society is organized around the needs and desires of humans, which in turn shapes her students' relationships with nonhuman animals as hierarchical and rooted in the utilitarian view of nonhuman animals for human benefit.

Citizenship Education and Animals. The notion of citizenship education was brought up twice in the interview. First, the interviewer asked participants to think about citizenship education, and the teachers tried to outline what they thought the tenets of being a good citizen entailed, what the role of the teacher was in these matters, and how those qualities relate to the relation with and protection of animals. These questions aimed to elicit educators' comprehensive understanding of citizenship education. Follow-up probes asked participants to consider how the tenets of citizenship education, outlined in their definition, related to the protection of animals.

Ms. Miller described a good citizen as someone who follows rules and the law and is an overall "kind and respectful human being." Ms. Davis maintained that a good citizen "helps, takes care, and looks out for the best interest of the community and everyone in it." Both participants stipulated that it was a teacher's duty to embody and model for their students what it is to be a good citizen. With that, they also agreed on the inextricable link between being a good

citizen and protecting animals. Ms. Miller made sense of that interconnectedness through an assertion that animals are part of our community and therefore deserve to be cared for:

> Dealing with issues in the school environment in a way that promotes being mindful of others and not always themself may encourage them to live a life that is selfless. They will think about how their actions and words affect others and not just themself. Thinking about protecting animals motivates students to think about the greater good and needs of our community. Being a good citizen means thinking about how they can protect their community, environment, and all living things that surround it.

Ms. Davis understood the connection in relation to choice about food: "A good citizen, I think, fights for the rights of animals, especially here where the food options are limitless. Do we really need to eat them?"

The second time citizenship education was addressed, participants were asked to consider whether they considered nonhuman animals to be a part of citizenship education. Both participants agreed that there was space for educating students about nonhuman animals as part of citizenship education. Ms. Miller again mentioned how her Grade 6 class would delight in that kind of learning because the students enjoy talking about animals. Ms. Davis drew a direct connection between valuing animal life and the Graduate Expectation of being a responsible citizen. Ms. Davis asserted,

> Well I think I need to make space for it. To care about people we do not know all around the world I think we need to teach students that caring is selfless. I think for a lot of people learning to care about animals seems so foreign because animals are only seen as food or something to help us live easier. So if we care, like actually care about animals and wanting to keep them safe, then we will learn that taking care of the planet and

> everything on it is what we all need to do to survive. I think now during Covid this is really important.

Interspecies Relationality

Participants shared diverse experiences, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of their interactions with animals, the impact of personal experiences, and the ongoing process of learning and reflection regarding ethical considerations related to animals.

Personal Experiences with Animals. Both participants recalled developing a relationship with a nonhuman animal during childhood. Ms. Miller recounts that her first relationship with a nonhuman animal began the moment her mother and father brought home a dog when she was young. By contrast, Ms. Davis cites a memory that does not actively involve her:

> I went away to a resort when I was young with my family and would see stray animals. I remember seeing the workers at the hotel sharing their food with the strays and thinking that I wanted to be like that. It made me feel good to know we were all taking care of each other.

The participants then were asked to share a story about an animal's life. Ms. Miller gave a nondescriptive story of animals, one of an animal hunting for prey. Ms. Davis recounted a scenario from her trip to Greece that made her laugh. It was about a donkey, who was being used to transport a traveller up a hill, kicking and running away. Both teachers told stories about animals that lacked detail about the animal itself, highlighting a broader issue within society where animals are commonly viewed as objects or tools for human use rather than sentient beings with their own intrinsic value. The anthroparchal message advanced in both of these

stories, that nonhuman animals exist to serve human purposes, normalizes an exploitative relationship.

Learning About Animals. When participants were asked what they knew about animals, the answers varied significantly. Ms. Miller spoke generally about knowing "some of their habitats, needs, survival skills" without mentioning any specific aspect. Ms. Davis spoke about her pet dogs and their ability to communicate and make choices and their emotional intelligence: "I know that they can definitely think, feel, and communicate—not the way we do but they definitely do. Try taking my dog on a walk. He will tell you if he does not want to go a certain way." The difference in the teachers' responses was further emphasized when participants were asked where they had learned about animals. Ms. Miller replied, "Movies, documentaries, and the internet," whereas Ms. Davis declared that she learned from her own animals but was not sure where else she could turn to for information: "From my own animals for sure. I like to watch documentaries about animals but probably from animals and my experience with them. I do not know where else I could learn about them really." The difference in responses shifted when the participants were asked if they knew any fictional stories about animals. Both Ms. Miller and Ms. Davis cited *The Three Little Pigs*.

The Video

Participants were shown a short 2-minute video. In the video a small child and a male parental figure have a discussion about animals and food.

Understanding the Child's Point of View. Both participants agreed that the child is sad because she realizes that humans eat animals. Even when the parental figure in the video distinguishes horses, an animal we do not eat, from animals that we do eat such as turkeys, pigs, chickens, and cows, participants discerned that the child did not share that distinction. Ms. Miller

said, “The child is building an emotional connection to animals and knowing that people are killing them to eat is not okay with the child as she mentions that eventually there will be no more animals left. She is aware that there is other food to eat in the world and animals do not have to be one.” In contrast, Ms. Davis explained, “The child responds this way because she does not see the distinction the parent is creating. All animals are nice to her.”

At one point in the video, the child refers to animals as people and the parental figure corrects them. The child then follows up by referring to the animals as “animal-people,” and this was a clear indication to Ms. Miller and Ms. Davis that the child values animal life as much as human life. Ms. Miller understood that the child in the video sees animals as “nice” and having “feelings” and able to express “emotions” just like humans. Ms. Davis used the words “important” and “worth” when describing the child’s point of view. The responses to this question also elucidated participants’ understandings of the parent’s conceptualization of the human relationship to animals. Ms. Davis observed that “the parent views animals the way society does: a source of income and a source of food.” Similarly, Ms. Miller explained, “The parent views the animals as not humans whereas the child views the animal as the same as humans because she understands them as having feelings and emotions and mentions several times that they are nice.”

Implications of Eating Animals. Participants were asked to think of the implications of eating animals and both cited climate change. Ms. Miller included “extinction, a high population of animals that are not eaten, and unstable habitats.” Ms. Davis listed “health problems for humans” and overall harm to the planet. As a follow-up, participants were asked whether or not they believed a child should be able to choose whether or not they eat animals and both responded with a resounding yes. Ms. Miller supported her stance with “If the child is able to

understand where their food comes from, they can make decisions to avoid or stay away from that food. I think being conscientious of what you are eating at a young age will benefit the child in the future."

Previous Knowledge

In the "Previous Knowledge" portion of the interview, participants were asked to elaborate on their knowledge and exposure to courses that centre on nonhuman animals.

Both participants had never taken a course about animals in any capacity and even mentioned that they did not know they were even offered; nor would they know where to look. Next, participants were asked if their teacher training addressed the relationship between human and nonhuman animals, and again both participants responded no. Ms. Davis qualified this answer: "No, but to be fair that is not part of the curriculum."

Cocreating Assignments

During this part of the interview the teachers were asked about designing units and lessons that centred on nonhuman animals. Then they were asked to think of a new lesson that focused on nonhuman animals. This CAR portion of the interview engaged both teachers in the study as active participants, fostering iterative reflection.

Designing a Language Unit That Includes Nonhuman Animals. Ms. Miller used a story about animals as the foundation for her hypothetical animal-centred unit. The story would include animals as characters and they would be given "emotional and human characteristics in order for students to make connections." Ms. Miller used the example of a story called *Owl Family* and explained that in this story humans adopt owls, who slowly begin to shed their innate abilities and become more human-like: "They begin to learn from the humans and therefore walk around like them and never learn how to fly and hunt their own food." Ms. Miller would counter

this fictional text with a nonfiction film about aquatic animals titled *Water Life*. The purpose of combining a fictional text with a nonfiction film would be to

> teach students how this affects our environment, for a small simple pleasure. What is going to happen in the future if this overfishing and overkilling continues? This will allow students to think critically about their own future when they will one day be adults and I think it will be more impactful after reading the first story. Animals have their own lives that we have to respect.

Similarly, Ms. Davis would also use a reading that includes animals as the foundation for her language unit. However, Ms. Davis's assessment asks the students to rewrite the story from the animal's perspective to better understand their point of view. She then shared a second idea about helping animals from the local shelter get adopted:

> The students would go online and read about the cats and dogs available for adoption and write something from their perspective. I could probably get the principal to agree to let the students read these on the announcements. I bet we could help animals find homes and the students would learn to write from a different point of view and do research.

Designing a Social Studies Unit That Includes Nonhuman Animals. Ms. Miller designed a social studies unit that centred on First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples' way of life with a focus on how animals were used. Ms. Davis focused on more current issues and examples to teach social studies. Ms. Davis said she would centre her unit on the overall expectation of cause and consequence:

> I would let students select individuals for group work and have them pick a current issue that is relevant to them. An example could be Covid and mask wearing. I would ask students to investigate how that issue impacts animals. Perhaps they would look at what

> kinds of resources it takes to mass produce masks or how the amount of garbage masks are hurting animal environments.

Designing an Animal-Centred Lesson. Both participants created lessons rooted in activism that sought to make changes at the school or class level. Ms. Miller's lesson idea was collaborative and involved whole-class participation. Her idea was to think of an animal-related issue together as a class and to research the problem together. It would be the class's job to work together to find ways to inform the rest of the school about this problem and ways to solve it:

> I would want the class to educate the rest of the school on this work because we would probably be the only one doing it. I think it could make a change, a ripple effect in the school, and then maybe teachers could copy it. I think teachers don't want to start making new lessons and going above and beyond even when they think the topic is important but if the idea or lesson is given to them, they may do it.

Similarly, Ms. Davis expressed a wish to make schoolwide change. In the research stage of the lesson, Ms. Davis would have her students consider "something everyday that hurts animals without thinking." She suggested it would possibly centre around food:

> Maybe it could be an idea where we start an initiative to have meatless Mondays at school. Lunches on Mondays have to be meatless and the class would have students preparing presentations and facts and videos to get administration on board. We could maybe even influence the snack program because that's free for the students and wouldn't put pressure on parents to buy different things.

Case Studies of Students

Navy: Biographic Overview

Navy is 13 years old and in Grade 8. He lives at home with his father, mother, and younger sister, and a dog. Navy attends a Catholic school close to home and does kickboxing three times a week. Before competing in kickboxing, Navy was involved in other sports: "I started soccer at a young age and still played it a lot then. I wouldn't be an athlete now if I hadn't played back then." At home, Navy does not have any chores or responsibilities other than doing his homework. He listed his mother as responsible for the cooking in the home but explained that on the weekend he had a say in what he ate. The typical dinner for Navy and his family was "mac and cheese." When asked if anyone in the home had a special diet, he stated, "Yes, my mom is vegetarian."

Ally: Biographic Overview

Ally is 11 years old and in Grade 6 at a Catholic school in the GTA. She lives with her father and mother. When asked if she had any siblings, she replied, "Yes, a brother and my dog." Ally summarized her childhood as centred around dance, school, and family: "I did dance competitively and still do, and I hung out with my friends. I went to school my whole life and hung out with family too." She currently attends dance class 5 days a week. At home, Ally is not responsible for any chores. According to Ally, her mom is responsible for the household cooking. She described a typical dinnertime meal as "pasta with sauce." When asked if anyone in her home had a special diet she replied, "No, but my mom is vegetarian."

Life at Home

The participants were asked if they discussed current issues with their siblings or parents, with a specific emphasis on climate change. One replied no and one said yes. Navy reported that

he and his family spoke about politics, especially Canadian politics: “We argued sometimes, but we usually had the same views.” I probed and asked what the arguments were about. He replied, “They were liberal and really cared about climate change and animals, and I didn’t.… I was more conservative.” On the other hand, Ally detailed, “Well, we talked about air quality sometimes. We want to make sure we are not polluting too much because we want to stay healthy in Canada.”

Participants were asked if they spent a lot of their time outdoors, and the decision was split. Navy cited Covid as the main reason for going outside. He declared, “Yes, on my dirt bike, building jumps for my dirt bike, catching frogs, and jumping on the trampoline.” However, Ally asserted, “No, I am mostly at dance.”

School Life

Both student participants attended a Catholic school. They had attended their current school since junior kindergarten. When participants were asked about their typical school day, both went into considerable detail about the events that happened before and during school. Navy outlined,

> I get up at 6:50 a.m.–ish. I go back to bed for another 5 minutes and then I hear my mom scream so I get out of bed. I put on deodorant, change, go downstairs, tell my mom what I want for breakfast and play on my phone until she says it’s ready. I have cinnamon apple Cheerios and blueberry Eggos every day. I eat and then grab my airpods, my books, pack my bag and leave because the bus gets me at 7:50. I get to school at like 8:20 or something, lunch is at 12:30 and I always have a ham and cheese with green olives and mayo. I leave school at 3 to get on the bus to go home by like 3:40-ish and I have another bowl of cereal for snack. I change and shower and then I work out for one and a half

hours. I box for like 30 minutes and then dinner is usually ready. It's mac and cheese or like sweet potatoes and chicken or steak or lamb. I like to play Xbox or ride my dirt bike depending on the weather and then I do my homework and go on my phone until bed. If I get hungry—I usually do—I have cereal again.

Ally recounted,

I wake up, I wash my face, do all that and brush my teeth. I go downstairs for breakfast and my mom usually makes me strawberries or like blueberries, something like that, with milk or orange juice, cow's milk that's 2%, not oat. Then I go back up to get dressed and rush to get the bus. When I get to school we do 30 minutes of reading, and then we go outside for an hour for recess and gym and then we come in to have snack. The first snack has to be healthy so it's like probably going to be apples or raspberries. And then we do any subject like math or writing or something like that and we have lunch after. Lunch is rice and corn or just plain rice and some days I have pasta with butter. Then we go back outside and when we come in we have French, sometimes gym but only two times a week and one day a week it's music. We go outside and then we come in for our snack but this snack can be not healthy so I have Oreos, sometimes fruit rollups, or goldfish crackers. Then we do writing or finish up any unfinished work then pack up to go back on the bus. The days I have dance, my dad picks me up.

Participants were also asked about their favourite subjects. Navy listed English as his favourite subject: "English, because I am good at it and I am good at articulating myself and have a good vocab." On the other hand, Ally volunteered that her favourite subject was health because she enjoys learning about which foods are healthy and which are not.

Learning About Animals

In this part of the interview, participants spoke about the first time they remember learning about animals in school. Navy recalled, "It was about ice caps and polar bears. At the time, it was not much of a crisis—we were drawing an Earth and did some arts and crafts, and I think the teacher made us donate two bucks for polar bears." Ally remembered,

> Probably like kindergarten but the first actual lesson I remember fully would probably be last year. I think it was about elephants in the zoo and how they were kept throughout the years and what they are fed I think. But I remember that three elephants died in a zoo because humans are not supposed to keep elephants locked up. I asked my teacher but my teacher really did not say anything about it but I don't think they should be kept in the zoo.

Participants were asked to think about any schoolwide initiatives or fundraisers related to climate change or animal welfare that they had taken part in, and whether their teachers had spent time in class talking about those initiatives. Navy announced that the school had raised $5,000 for the koalas threatened by the wildfires in Australia: "My teacher taught us that the fires were happening, and we watched a video from the news one day. Then a person came into the gym and gave a presentation to the school." Moreover, Ally listed multiple initiatives her school participated in: "Last year we had a thing for Australia fires, and every year there was a Halloween dance for cancer research, so you had to pay $2 to go. Oh, and at Christmas, we did a canned food drive for the people who needed food." Her teachers did not give lessons on the initiatives: "They didn't give us a lesson, but they told us that we should donate. Sometimes they would say if we knew anyone that had cancer to make us take it more seriously."

Students were asked two questions about stories regarding animals outside of school: *Do your parents read you stories about animals? What books about animals have you read?* Navy noted that his parents did not read him stories about animals, whereas Ally mentioned that her parents sometimes still did. Both participants indicated that they had read books about animals themselves. Navy stated, "I read books about the Arctic and the jungle and other books about lots of animals. I used to read a lot about the rainforest." Ally described reading stories that included animals but were not specifically about animals: "Probably the Olivia books where the pig is the main character."

Reading About Animals in School

The students also were asked if they remembered the first books they were ever able to read, and both listed books about animals. Navy could not remember the name of the book but described it as "the one where the green caterpillar turns into a butterfly." Ally said, "Probably *Charlotte's Web*, and it's about a girl with a spider who writes messages and a pig."

Then participants were asked how often they read, listen to, or watch texts that include animals. Navy announced that he saw a lot of pets on Instagram and stated, "I feel like most of the people I watch on YouTube that vlog or people on TikTok have a pet dog or cat, but they are not always in the video. On TV, a lot of cartoons have talking animals. I do not really read." Ally remembered reading Elephant and Piggie stories when she was younger, about an elephant and his best friend, a pig, and reported watching *Arthur*, where all the characters are animals, with her younger brother.

Both Navy and Ally indicated that in these texts the animals were seldom main characters except in cartoons, and even then they had to act like humans. Navy detailed, "In cartoons, yeah, they were almost always given human qualities. Like in *Family Guy*, the dog can talk but he's a

more main character. I think when they can't talk they are not the main character like *The Simpsons*." Ally added, "They were not the main characters usually. But in some movies like *The Little Mermaid*, there was a talking fish and crab and they were more main characters. Some shows when I was little like *Franklin* or even *Paw Patrol* had talking animals as main characters." In sum, Navy and Ally predominantly consume media featuring anthropomorphized animal characters.

Learning Language at School

The interview pivoted to probe about reading and language learning at school. The participants listed reading as the most important strand in language; however, their reasonings differed. Navy suggested that the remaining three strands in language relied on reading, while Ally explained, "You need to read well in order to get into a good university." Ally listed oral communication as the least important, whereas Navy chose media. Ally rationalized, "Oral, because it's easy," whereas Navy said, "Media because it won't really help us in the future. Media is more about fun unless you want to be a YouTuber, but I don't think teachers know how to help with that. Like my teacher probably never heard of TikTok." Media and oral communication were also the two strands in language the participants listed as spending the least amount of time learning. Navy picked media as his answer because "we're always doing writing and reading. If not, are we even doing English?" Ally answered oral communication, explaining that she thought everyone already spoke English.

Learning Social Studies at School

When asked about the structure of their social studies lessons and the style of delivery, Navy and Ally indicated that the teacher came to class prepared with a reading and a preplanned lecture. However, they also indicated that if they had questions, their teacher would answer them.

However, only Navy stated that his teacher would pivot from their planned lesson to discuss whatever other issue was brought up in class. Navy declared, “The teacher is prepared with some kind of lesson but if we had a question we looked up information together and talked about it, and the lesson went a different way which I liked.”

Asking about climate change education and its impact on animal life, both student participants declared that animals were part of the conversation only when their being in danger of extinction pertained to human life. Navy reported,

> We learned about how climate change was going to change human life because we would run out of water and places would drown. My teacher said it was important to try and stop climate change but never for the sake of animal life.

Ally spoke about the ways in which her teachers connected climate change to the idea of food chains:

> We learned that if we do not make big changes to help stop climate change then more and more animals will become extinct and if this happens we will be impacted too. If certain animals die then other animals in that food chain won’t have food to eat. This might mean that we won’t get to eat certain kinds of meat or have certain animals in zoos anymore or things like that. For example, if the glaciers keep melting where will the penguins up there go? I think they will just drown.

The exclusion of nonhuman animal life in lessons about climate change, outside of their direct relation to the disruption of human life, reveals the anthroparchal messages transmitted through Ally’s and Navy’s schooling. The absence of discussions about nonhuman animals suggests their perceived insignificance relative to human concerns. As Ally explained, animal welfare becomes an important issue only when animals commonly consumed by humans are

endangered, affecting human access to meat. Ally does not question the practice of breeding and killing certain animals for consumption or displacing animals from their homes to live in zoos for human entertainment, as these practices are socially normalized. The emphasis on nonhuman animal domination also intersects with the power relations rooted in socioeconomic status, privileging those with greater access to capital and thereby greater access to food. Here, the students' education emphasizes a hierarchical relationship between humans and nonhuman animals, and humans with access to food and those without.

When I asked if they considered the impact climate change had on animal life important, I received a resounding yes. Navy responded, "Yes, because it was going to impact wildlife before it impacts us, and that is a demonstration of what would happen to humans. We are not the only ones on the planet, so we have to take care of it. With ecosystems, if one species goes missing, it's a chain reaction." Navy emphasized the need to care for the planet because harm to wildlife serves as a precursor to human suffering, reflecting a speciesist perspective that values animal life primarily in relation to human well-being. Ally mentioned some ways in which we could slow down climate change: "We could stop buying from big websites like Amazon and buy from a small business because big companies hurt the planet more. They had factories and flew their product in from anywhere. And animals were just as important as people and deserved to live on a healthy planet."

Citizenship Education

In this part of the interview, participants were asked to elucidate the qualities of a good citizen, the role their teacher played in preparing them to become good citizens, and the relationship between being a good citizen and protecting animals.

Here students identified various qualities associated with being a good citizen, all involving helping any living being in need. Navy's definition included "being part of the working class, paying taxes, being a landowner, being part of an inclusive community, and doing things that give back to the community, especially groups that need help." Ally's definition was environmentally focused: "It was someone who reduced, reused, and recycled, did not litter, someone who did not hurt animals, and someone who picked up garbage when they saw it because when you picked up garbage it looked nicer and it took years to break down. Animals could eat it and die."

Both participants communicated that a teacher's role in preparing students to become good citizens was to model the behaviour and actions of a good citizen, alongside educating them on the importance of doing what was right. Ally specified, "I think they needed to show us what was right and wrong and teach us things so when we were older we knew how to act. They had to teach us about recycling and what happened to stuff when we bought it and threw it away."

Again, both participants agreed that being a good citizen and the protection of animals were inextricably connected. Navy asserted, "I thought a good citizen cared about animals and wanted to take care of them too. If you saw an animal on the road, you stopped for them, if they were hurt, you helped it. It was the same idea with helping a person or neighbour." In a similar fashion, Ally proclaimed, "Good citizens stood up for animals. We had to help give back to them. We could adopt old animals or sick ones too if you had the money." Both students view animal protection as part of good citizenship and indicate a sense of responsibility and empathy for nonhuman animals. Although the responses highlight an ethical consideration for nonhuman

animals, the students stop short of speaking to the importance of activism and working to dismantle the speciesist practices that are already in place within society.

Interspecies Relationality

Both participants acknowledged that meeting their pet for the first time marked the start of reflection about their relationship with animals. For Navy, this occurred at the age of 10 and involved his pet lizard. Ally explained that when she got her pet dog Star, she realized how much she cared about animals in general:

> When I got Star, I never knew I could care about an animal so much until I got her. Then I remembered I went to the Toronto Zoo a bunch of years ago and I saw a giraffe and I really like them. I would research about giraffes and wanted to donate to places that help giraffes. Now I bring my dog outside for walks, I feed her and give her water and make sure to bring her to the vet.

Even though both of the participants had relationships with animals, the information they volunteered on the topic varied greatly. Ally admitted, "I know a lot of animals but not a lot about them. I know that we use some for food here and some not for food. I do not know why but I think about not eating meat sometimes because when I think about a live chicken and then eating chicken I feel bad." Navy answered generally: "I would say I am informed about animal habitats, threats to their habitats, and threats to their well-being as a species." The student participants acknowledged the inconsistency of speciesist practices towards nonhuman animals. They were able to recognize that there is a hierarchy of value: animals we use for food and animals we keep as pets.

Participants mentioned school and online sources as places where they learn about animals. Ally remarked,

> YouTubers and my teachers. Mainly about how the animal is, where they live, and sometimes, especially in school, like how those animals are part of human life. So cows and chickens and pigs are really a big part of our food life but dogs and cats are part of our family life because they are pets.

Navy also included family members as a source of knowledge and spoke about learning from an in-school experience when reptiles visited.

When participants were asked to share a story about an animal, both students told me stories about their pets. Again, when asked to speak about different animals and where they live, participants referred to events they had experienced. Navy detailed a story about a red fox he met at camp, and Ally spoke about seeing a dolphin in the ocean during a family vacation. The participants' connections to nonhuman animals are grounded in their personal experiences and anthropocentric perspectives. Sharing stories about their pets suggested that the students' initial thinking is rooted in seeing animals as objects of human interest. Even after being prompted, students shared stories about animals they had direct personal experiences with. This could indicate that their knowledge of nonhuman animals is limited and that nonhuman animals come to mind only in relation to themselves, reflecting an anthropocentric point of view.

The Video

After watching a short 2-minute video, both students observed that the child in the video was upset because she came to the realization that animals were dying for others to eat. Ally said, "She was mad because the farmers chopped up animals, and she didn't want to eat them or see them die because she liked animals." In addition, participants were asked to think about an interaction between the parental figure and the child over eating certain types of animals and not others. The child began this interaction by saying she did not want to "eat horseys," and the

parent responded by explaining that we did not eat horses but we did eat turkeys, chickens, cows, and pigs. The child objected and said that those animals were nice too. Navy made sense of this interaction by differentiating between livestock and pets: "They were telling the kid about livestock versus pets. Kids didn't know the difference between livestock that was bred for us to eat and horses and dogs." Ally commented,

> I think the dad said that to make her understand we only eat certain animals but not horses. Maybe horses are her favourite animal so she thinks like I can't eat those. Like at dinner I guess the dad is thinking we eat chicken but not horses so don't cry. Maybe she went to a farm and thinks those animals are nice but maybe she really does not want to eat any animal. Or maybe she thinks the animals are nice because she learned about those animals in preschool or in a TV show like *Peppa Pig*.

Ally's response uncovers the anthroparchal messages embedded within the father's response and the child's reaction. The father's explanation reflects societal constructs that dictate which animals are acceptably bred for consumption and suggests that her dietary preference is subordinate to these norms. Beyond asserting human dominion over nonhuman animal life, this exchange underscores how the child's agency in her diet is not acknowledged because of her age. The father is older and therefore has control over what his child eats and is offered to eat.

Further, both student participants agreed that there was a clear difference between the way in which the child viewed animals and how the parental figure viewed them. Without any discrepancy, participants asserted that the parental figure understood animals as food and the child understood animals as beings with feelings and a life. Ally declared, "The parent saw animals as food and something that farmers needed to chop up for the rest of us to eat. The child viewed animals as more than food and did not want [them] to be food at all. They were alive and

had feelings like her." Similarly, Navy shared, "The dad saw animals as just animals and as food. The girl viewed animals like her because she called them people." Moreover, student participants both believed that a child should have a say in whether they wanted to eat animals or not. Navy and Ally's assertion of the child's agency acts as a form of activism against ageist notions of agency. Rather than adopting the societal norm of allowing the father to have complete control over his child and her diet, the students both opine that the child should have agency. I view this as a form of rebellion against societal norms and hierarchies of power.

Finally, participants were asked to think about possible impacts eating animals could have. Common among all the answers was a connection to food. Navy postulated, "Maybe a change in genetics in animals themselves. Chicken today is different from the chicken people ate hundreds of years ago. The quality of meat will go down for sure." And Ally responded, "If we keep eating animals until they disappear, maybe we will start eating new animals or maybe new kinds will appear. Well, I think it means more animals will need to be born so we can eat hamburgers and steak."

Students as Advocates

In the CAR part of the study, I asked the students to codesign a project or activity that focused on animals and that they could imagine themselves working on in class. After speaking with Navy about the reptile experience he had mentioned earlier, he decided that having another organization come into the class with animals was a great idea. He thought that raising money for the organization would be a great way to get the class, and even the school, excited about their visit and involved with helping the animals. Navy also believed a hands-on experience was the best way to engage his classmates: "I think a good trip would be to go to an animal sanctuary. I saw one on Instagram once and people can volunteer to take care of animals for the day and feed

them and walk them. I think this would show us how to focus on animals and what their life is like and maybe teach us to be nicer to them." After asking him what kind of animals he would hope to see at the sanctuary, he decided that ideally it would be a sanctuary that had animals he did not think of as being as nice or as cute as typical farm animals.

Ally, on the other hand, struggled to think of an actual activity. She began by saying, "It should probably be about why we should care about and not eat animals as much. Maybe then it should be about pigs, chickens, and cows." After discussing why she thinks so many people eat pigs, chickens, and cows, she suggested that it was because those were the ingredients in the recipes the parents ate growing up. It was from this that she thought it would be a great idea to have everyone bring in a recipe and change it to be vegetarian: "My mom is vegetarian and she could come into the class and help. She would love that." Ally explained that once the recipes were written, the students could compile them and share them with all the parents.

Also, Ally thought an independent project would be a great idea. Her idea was to task everyone with interacting with an animal or their own pet: "I think we could all spend time with an animal or pet, if you have it, and try to understand it better. We could take videos of us doing things with the pet like a video journal, and by the end of the week we would definitely understand that animal better." I challenged her idea with the possibility that not every child had a pet to do this with and that animals that lived outside would be hard to track down. Ally considered this barrier to the activity and in turn suggested that a class pet would make the assignment possible: "We could each take turns bringing the pet home. I saw it on TV once."

At the end of the interview, I asked each student if they had any questions for me or if they wanted to tell me more about something we had been talking about. Navy did not have anything to add. Ally, on the other hand, ended her interview by sharing, "People should not eat

animals as much or use them as food because they have a life too, have babies, make little houses, they eat, and they just get killed and that's sad."

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I summarize the findings from interviews with two teachers and two students whom I recruited as participants for this study. Analysis of data collected from teacher and student participants provided insight into the connections youth make between our economic system, anthroparchal messages embedded within language in general and educational discourses in particular, and their citizenship responsibilities. In the following chapter, I undertake a systematic analysis of these case-study findings to triangulate my analysis and arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in my research data.

Chapter 6: Findings 2: The Stories the Stories Tell

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the findings from the interviews that primarily addressed participants' orientations towards and relationships with nonhuman animals. I begin by categorizing the rationales that underlie the responses that participants provided to the various interview elicitations, paying special attention to the explanations participants provided in elaborating their answers. I next produce a rubric that summarizes these response categories, organizing the identified rationales into a developmental scale to indicate that I consider these rationales to represent an ascending grid with regard to the issue of orientation to and valuing of nonhuman animals. Subsequently, using the scale I have developed, I undertake a comparison of teacher and student participant responses regarding the valuing of nonhuman animal life and the integration of teachings and learnings about nonhuman animals into the classroom curriculum. Finally, I revisit my initial analysis of the Ontario curriculum document, examining how it is understood and implemented by both teachers and students.

Rationales for Views on Species Differences and Value

When I examined the interview transcripts, it became evident that there were distinct rationales, or arguments, provided by participants for their responses regarding views on appreciation for and treatment of nonhuman animal life. Five significant patterns emerged from the interview data:

1. anthropocentric concerns;
2. anthropomorphic fantasies;
3. impact on climate and ecosystems;
4. alignment with notions of "good citizen";
5. all species as having dignity and deserving respect.

In the following subsections, I identify the common discourse in each argument and provide examples from the case study data that represent this level of reasoning. I start with what I consider to be the lowest level of moral reasoning pertaining to this subject matter, Level 1, and proceed to the highest, Level 5. Table 1 summarizes these discourses and represents them on a developmental scale.

Level 1: Anthropocentric Concerns

Within this category, responses are framed in terms of the needs and wants of humans—most often, the participant and/or members of their household. There are two tangents to these arguments, one based on the positive impact of consumption of animals or animal byproducts and the other based on the deleterious consequences of injudicious consumption. An example of the first tangent was shared by a teacher:

> I remember being little and watching my grandmother and mom break down a chicken. I kept thinking to myself "What is happening here?" I asked my mom why we would want to eat something dead and she told me because it was good for me. So my first memory of the relationship between us and animals is that they are healthy food for us.

An example of the second tangent was provided by a student participant: "If we keep eating animals until they disappear, maybe we will start eating new animals or maybe new kinds will appear. Well, I think it means more animals will need to be born so we can eat hamburgers and steak." Note that the concern here revolves around the prospect of having to abstain from consuming foods the participant enjoys eating if consumption is not controlled. This concern is mirrored in another quote from a second student participant: "This might mean that we won't get to eat certain kinds of meat or have certain animals in zoos anymore or things like that." Here,

the fear is about missing out on certain foods and not being in a position to be entertained by animals at the zoo.

Another teacher participant shared, “I have given up red meat and I know I need to eat more plant-based for the benefit of me.” Then, in relation to their pedagogy, the same participant contributed, “I know animals and eating meat and climate change are all connected but I am not sure how to start or even approach the subject.” Note that in this discourse, the subject’s key argument centres on the adverse effects on human health and/or prosperity and not on the moral implications of slaughtering animals.

Level 2: Anthropomorphic Fantasies

Within this argument, human characteristics are attributed to nonhuman animals, rendering them more relatable in a positive manner. The interview data contain numerous examples of participants likening their pets to people, using descriptors typically used to describe human qualities. Using discourse that emphasizes the similarity between themselves and their pets, participants at the same time signal both their empathy for these nonhuman animals and their commitment to treating their pets in a benign or “humane” manner—as, in Ally’s words, “one of the family.” While on the surface this anthropomorphic characteristic seemingly assigns significant value to nonhuman animal life, the criterion privileged for assigning this value is the degree of closeness to the human persona, and the empathy earned is justified by the identification of similarities with these traits—not, pointedly, on an appreciation of difference.

Ms. Miller resorts to this type of anthropomorphic imagining after viewing the short video where the child discusses the treatment of animals and their use as food with a parental figure. Ms. Miller explains her understanding of the child’s use of the phrase *animal-people* as follows: “The parent views the animals as not humans whereas the child views the animal as the

same as humans because she understands them as having feelings and emotions and mentions several times that they are nice." Ms. Miller infers that the child is upset about the killing of animals for food because she sees a similarity between humans and animals. She recalls the child describing animals as "nice" and having the ability to express "feelings," just like humans. Here, Ms. Miller presumes that the child's profound concern for animals emerges from attributing human attributes to them and perceiving their behaviours and actions as akin to those of humans. This orientation captures an anthropocentric standard.

Another example of anthropomorphic reasoning was revealed when Ms. Davis spoke about her pet dogs and their ability to communicate and make choices and their emotional intelligence: "I know that they can definitely think, feel, and communicate—not the way we do but they definitely do. Try taking my dog on a walk. He will tell you if he does not want to go a certain way." Ms. Davis acknowledges the distinctions in communication between humans and her dog. However, she emphasizes the significance of her pet's ability to communicate and make choices, such as deciding which direction to go on a walk, as this behaviour mirrors the decision-making and agency that humans demonstrate.

As with Level 1, the anthropomorphic reasoning of Level 2 is anthropocentric. Through anthropomorphism, nonhuman animals are viewed and interpreted through a human-centric lens, and human-like traits are more valued. As a result, hierarchies develop wherein nonhuman animals that closely resemble humans and their traits are placed higher than nonhuman animals that do not.

Level 3: Impact on Climate and Ecosystems

Within this argument, nonhuman animal life is seen as an important consideration given its potential effects on climate and its capacity to enhance or disrupt ecosystems. Mass farming is

associated with this rationale, with a particular emphasis on its deleterious contribution to climate change. Such considerations are deemed important because climate change–induced alterations, including the potential extinction of animals, are known to affect our way of life. For example, according to Navy, the extinction of bees would mean humans no longer have access to honey and could then no longer enjoy eating it. We acknowledge here how Level 1 considerations bleed into Level 3. (This isn't a perfect system. Individuals are conflicted as they struggle to make sense of complex issues.) An example from the interview data illustrates this blending of levels: "We learned that if we do not make big changes to help stop climate change then more and more animals will become extinct and if this happens we will be impacted too. If certain animals die then other animals in that food chain won't have food to eat."

However, the repercussions extend beyond dietary changes: rising sea levels resulting from climate change may soon inundate low-lying coastal regions, displacing populations and reshaping global travel patterns. One participant volunteered, "We learned about how climate change was going to change human life because we would run out of water and places would drown." In addition, as participants argued, changes in temperature, precipitation, and snowpack can significantly impact the availability and quality of outdoor recreational opportunities. Similarly, rising temperatures and shifts in weather patterns can result in increased energy demands for cooling in summer and heating in winter, among other inconvenient consequences, thereby producing scarcities.

Level 4: Alignment with Notions of "Good Citizen"

In this rationale, the presumed connection between notions of good citizenship and the protection of vulnerable nonhuman animals serves as the key motivator for assigning value to nonhuman animal lives. Examples of rationales that follow this line of argumentation abound:

"A good citizen in relation to the protection of animals stands up for them and advocates for a change for their favour." "Thinking about protecting animals motivates students to think about the greater good and needs of our community." "Being a good citizen means thinking about how they can protect their community, environment, and all living things that surround it." Here, the term *protection* encompasses behaviours associated with responsible citizenship such as abstaining from or cutting down on eating meat, volunteering with organizations that work to raise money for the housing or rescue of animals, planting more flowers to help preserve endangered animal species, and discontinuing the use of insecticides to maintain bee populations.

Further, when asked about the definition of a good citizen, Ms. Miller acknowledges that the humane treatment of animals is integral; however, she perceives the act of protecting animals as a means to motivate students rather than an end in itself. She says, "Thinking about protecting animals motivates students to think about the greater good and needs of our community. Being a good citizen means thinking about how they can protect their community, environment, and all living things that surround it."

Thus, while Ms. Miller acknowledges the inseparable link between animal welfare and good citizenship, she suggests at the same time that acts related to the preservation of animals may not be essential to achieving what appears to be the primary concern of being a good citizen: the greater good (a utilitarian perspective which is common in an animal welfare perspective). This notion is reinforced in the sentence where she clarifies that being a good citizen entails protecting the community, the environment, and all living things that inhabit it. The term *animal* is absent, and when animals are alluded to under the umbrella phrase *all living things*, they are mentioned last. However, the separation of community and environment from all living things is anthropocentric, suggesting that *community* is referencing humans, while *the*

environment is a term used to refer to the land. Whether or not placing the phrase *all living things* last is reflective of a hierarchy of importance for Ms. Miller, it is evident that concern for nonhuman animals is seen as a means to bringing out students' better selves, as it were, by motivating others to take better care of the community and the environment.

Note that although within this perspective the protection of nonhuman animals is seen as commendable, the reason it is regarded as commendable is that the associated behaviours correspond to societally sanctioned notions of good personhood. For this reason, I place this category at a lower level on the scale than the category that follows as it issues from an imposed doctrine rather than a process of moral reasoning that results in the genuine valuing of animals for the inherent worth of their lives.

Level 5: All Species as Having Dignity and Deserving Respect

At Stage 5, the underlying argument is that all animal life, both human and nonhuman, is equally meaningful and of equal value and consequently deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Not surprisingly, we do not see many examples of this reasoning category in the interview data for this study. However, the following quotation from student participant Navy stands out as exemplary: "I saw one on Instagram once and people can volunteer to take care of animals for the day and feed them and walk them. I think this would show us how to focus on animals and what their life is like and maybe teach us to be nicer to them." When asked to codesign an animal-centred activity the student could envision their class enjoying, Navy suggested a trip to an animal sanctuary. I asked Navy what kinds of animals he hoped would be at the sanctuary, he explained that he hoped there would be animals that were not traditionally perceived as nice or cute and were different from what would be typically found at a farm. Here Navy unknowingly promotes the CAS notion of positive contact, to expose students to animals

they are not familiar with or necessarily drawn to so that they are able to understand the intrinsic value of their life. Navy's choice to visit an animal sanctuary over a zoo suggests that he is cognizant of the ethical concerns surrounding the confinement of animals in zoos. It suggests, too, that he does not condone the mistreatment of animals in captivity.

Another example—part of a larger quote that details ways she thinks society can slow down climate change, explored later in this chapter—was shared by student participant Ally: "And animals were just as important as people and deserved to live on a healthy planet." Ally reveals that she understands humans and nonhuman animals as equally deserving. It is important to note that only the student participants exemplified the ability to reach the fifth level of consciousness (see Table 1).

Table 1 summarizes the aforementioned perspectives and their associated discourses. While I consider only the fifth rationale to be consistent with the vision and goals of CAS, I find the perspectives, and their associated discourses, to line up well on a developmental hierarchy—with deference to Piaget (1950) and my supervisor, Sandra Schecter (Pacini-Ketchabaw & Schecter, 2002). Accordingly, I have assigned a "level" to each of the discourse models, with 1 representing the lowest level of consciousness with regard to the equitable treatment of nonhuman animals and 5 representing the highest.

Table 1

Discourses on Species Differences and Their Treatment and Value

Level	Name of Dominant Discourse	Sample Quotes
1	**Anthropocentric Concerns**	"I saw an animal hunting another animal to eat. It's part of the food chain." (Ms. Miller)
2	**Anthropomorphic Fantasies**	"I care about animals and living with my pets, I know that animals are a lot more like us than people think." (Ms. Davis)
3	**Impact on Climate and Ecosystems**	"We are not the only ones on the planet, so we have to take care of it. With ecosystems, if one species goes missing, it's a chain reaction." (Navy)
4	**Alignment with Notions of "Good Citizen"**	"Good citizens stood up for animals. We had to help give back to them. We could adopt old animals or sick ones too if you had the money." (Ally)
5	**All Species as Having Dignity and Deserving Respect**	**"**Ideally the sanctuary has animals that me and the people in my class wouldn't think of as cute. Nontypical farm animals would really force us to get to know them." (Navy)

Comparison of Teacher and Student Perspectives

Before continuing, I wish to own my bias in favour of opinions and practices corresponding to an ascending order of categories. I believe that those who engage in reductive discourses as illustrated in the discourses contained within Categories 1 and 2 disadvantage the equitable treatment of all species while those who elect to challenge pervasive discourses about the utility and worth of nonhuman animals as illustrated in the higher levels create conditions for a more ethical distribution of power and resources that will redound to the benefit of all species.

This said, it is not possible for me to take the data collected for this study and apply the scale to the case studies such that each participant is found to align conveniently to a single discursive framework. It could perhaps be considered a positive outcome of the CAR dimension of this project that participants' perspectives represent moving parts, insofar as they engage with the substantive content of our discussions and are motivated to rethink their positions.

Still, each participant can be associated with a preponderance of contributions that coalesce around several particular discourse categories. Briefly, for Ms. Miller, the preponderance of responses fall in Levels 1 and 2. The majority of Ms. Davis's responses tend to align to Levels 1 and 3, with touches of 4. Navy's responses fall across Levels 3, 4, and 5, whereas Ally's responses oscillate across Levels 1, 3, 4 and 5.

Ms. Miller

Reflecting on her own pedagogy, Ms. Miller acknowledges the scant inclusion of nonhuman animals in material she reads, watches, or listens to with her class. As the interview progresses, however, she notes several times that the majority of her students "own their own pets." This realization prompts her to consider that pets could be used as a segue for her to inspire her students to engage more deeply with other subjects and assignments. Here, Ms. Miller's expressed need to effectively teach the expectations of Ontario curricula is met through the use of nonhuman animals that students can relate to (Level 1). However, the lessons here are not radical: the term *own* suggests that for Ms. Miller pets are closer to objects than living beings. However, Ms. Miller also appreciates the empathy and interest her students express for their pets as something that can be replicated if other nonhuman animals can be thought of in the same way, or if the same characteristics can be attributed to them (Level 2).

This interest in the overlapping characteristics between humans and their pets, or nonhuman animals in general, reveals that humans value similarity over difference and use that to create hierarchies. As a result, educators' pedagogy may benefit from starting with similarities before moving to differences between humans and nonhuman animals. The exploration of difference could foster connection first among humans, promoting an embrace of diversity and eventually leading to learning beyond the human species. An understanding of other species would highlight the various intersectional oppressions—sexism, ableism, classism, racism, ageism, heterosexism—that we perpetuate without recognizing speciesism as the root justification.

During the interview, Ms. Miller was prompted to recount a story about an animal's life. In response, she described observing an unspecified animal hunting for prey: "I saw an animal hunting another animal to eat. It's part of the food chain." The phrasing used in the latter half of the statement suggests a normalization of the act of hunting Ms. Miller witnessed, justified within the context of her understanding of ecological food chains. This, coupled with her consumption of meat, aligns with a perspective that considers animal consumption as important and customary, suggesting a belief that such eating practices play a vital role in ecosystem balance. Further, it suggests that humans are and should be at the top of the food chain. Ms. Miller's position implies a concern that abstaining from animal consumption could potentially disrupt ecosystems and, in turn, food chains; however, Ms. Miller fails to realize that humans have choice**.**

Ms. Davis

When asked about her teaching methods, Ms. Davis mentioned that she frequently incorporates resources that feature animals; however, she noted that these resources often depict

animals in an anthropomorphic manner. She went on to elucidate how her personal bias influenced her pedagogy surrounding climate change: “I don’t know that talking about how greenhouse gas emissions from driving a car resonates with them so I talk more about fast fashion and mass farming.” However, while discussing citizenship education, Ms. Davis drew a direct connection between valuing animal life and the Graduate Expectation of being a responsible citizen:

> I think for a lot of people learning to care about animals seems so foreign because animals are only seen as food or something to help us live easier. So if we care, like actually care, about animals and wanting to keep them safe, then we will learn that taking care of the planet and everything on it is what we all need to do to survive.

This response revealed moments of Level 4 consciousness, where being a good citizen centred around the valuing of animal life. Later in the interview, continuing her argument about being a good citizen, Ms. Davis asserted, “A good citizen, I think, fights for the rights of animals, especially here where the food options are limitless. Do we really need to eat them? I know I sound hypocritical because I eat fish but I think advocating and starting somewhere is the sign of a good citizen.” However, as the interview progressed, Ms. Davis’s contributions became more focused on the connection between mass farming and human health: Levels 1 and 3.

This theme is further reinforced when Ms. Davis responds to questions following the video she is shown during her interview. She acknowledges society’s perception of animals as “a source of income and a source of food.” In light of her earlier answer about sounding hypocritical because she eats fish, it becomes evident that Ms. Davis considers herself part of this societal perspective. Moreover, when asked about the implications of eating animals, Ms.

Davis highlights the health risks associated with meat consumption, Level 1, and the broader deleterious environmental consequences caused by mass farming, Level 3.

The connection to mass farming and its environmental impact resurfaces when Ms. Davis is tasked with planning a social studies lesson. In her lesson plan, she envisions students researching the effects of current issues on animals, citing the example of discarded masks during the Covid-19 pandemic harming animal habitats. While this example could potentially align Ms. Davis with Rationale 3, given her strong stance on animals as a food source, it remains uncertain whether concerns for animal environments are primarily driven by their potential impact on meat quality once consumed or concern for the environment itself. My hypothesis is reinforced when Ms. Davis is prompted to devise an animal-centred lesson:

> Maybe it could be an idea where we start an initiative to have meatless Mondays at school. Lunches on Mondays have to be meatless and the class would have students preparing presentations and facts and videos to get administration on board. We could maybe even influence the snack program because that's free for the students and wouldn't put pressure on parents to buy different things.

Ms. Davis chose to centre animals in her lesson by exploring them as a food source. The presentations and facts she alludes to in the description of her lesson imply that there are advantages to consuming plant-based foods, significant enough to persuade the snack program at her school to invest in purchasing plant-based snacks. For Ms. Davis, the primary goal is educating students about eating more plant-based food, an objective more easily achieved by informing them about the adverse effects nonhuman animals have on human health. I interpret Ms. Davis's response as being at Level 1 because the lesson is ultimately anthropocentric: concerned with the benefits eating plant-based food has for humans. If Ms. Davis had connected

the benefits of not eating meat and hence not supporting mass farming with climate change, then this could have been considered Level 3.

Navy

At the beginning of the interview, while discussing home life, Navy revealed that he and his family members routinely discussed climate change: "They were liberal and really cared about climate change and animals, and I didn't. I thought I was more conservative now." The tense used here is telling: in the first part of his response, Navy refers to his family as *they* and chooses the word *were* to relegate their progressive views to the past. The intention of the tense choice becomes increasingly evident in the latter part of the response where Navy chooses the word *thought* to suggest that his current political stance is different from what he had previously believed. The phrase *I was more conservative* in relation to the aforementioned topics of climate change and animals indicates that Navy is sharing that he now also now holds liberal views on these topics, as compared with his conservative beliefs in the past (Level 3).

The importance of climate change resurfaces when Navy is asked about his education on the topic. Navy critiqued what he perceived as gaps in his teacher's lesson: "We learned about how climate change was going to change human life because we would run out of water and places would drown. My teacher said it was important to try and stop climate change but never for the sake of animal life." Navy, presumably because of learning that has taken place beyond the classroom, is able to adeptly discern the limited focus of his teacher's climate pedagogy in that her concern is only for the consequences for human life.

Following that question, I asked Navy if he considered the impact climate change had on animal life important, and he declared, "Yes, because it was going to impact wildlife before it impacts us, and that is a demonstration of what would happen to humans. We are not the only

ones on the planet, so we have to take care of it. With ecosystems, if one species goes missing, it's a chain reaction." The interconnectedness of human choices, climate change, animal life, and eventually human life seems to be clear to Navy. With this logic firmly inscribed, it comes as no surprise that his definition of being a responsible citizen includes the protection of animals.

First, when asked to define what being a responsible citizen meant, Navy detailed, "Being part of the working class, paying taxes, being a landowner, being part of an inclusive community, and doing things that give back to the community, especially groups that need help." Later on, when asked if protecting animals is part of this definition, he replied: "I thought a good citizen cared about animals and wanted to take care of them too. If you saw an animal on the road, you stopped for them; if they were hurt, you helped it. It was the same idea with helping a person or neighbour." The student's second response seems to indicate that the phrase *groups that need help* in his first response refers to any living being. Indeed, Navy's word choice suggests that, in his mind, the definition of responsible citizenship includes a component that focuses on the protection of animals as beings deserving respect and empathy in their own right (Levels 4 and 5).

Navy also was asked to make sense of an interaction between the child and the parental figure in a video. He concluded that the child in the video was unable to distinguish between animals that are pets and animals that are bred for livestock: "Kids didn't know the difference between livestock that was bred for us to eat and horses and dogs." This, coupled with his hypothesis about the implications of consuming animals, revealed his perspectives on the role of evolution in determining the value of animals: "Maybe a change in genetics in animals themselves. Chicken today is different from the chicken people ate hundreds of years ago. The quality of meat will go down for sure." Navy recognizes that there is a difference between certain

animals and others and therefore values particular animal life more than other animal life. Further, the second response suggests an understanding that human interference with mass producing chicken has altered the quality and taste when compared to earlier years. Here, Navy values animal life based on their purpose: socially accepted companions or food.

However, when invited to codesign an animal-centred activity as a curricular unit and given time to reflect independently and in conversation with me about his choice of direction, Navy transitions to a new level of consciousness. It is during these conversations that he emerges with something stunningly transformational:

> I think a good trip would be to go to an animal sanctuary. I saw one on Instagram once and people can volunteer to take care of animals for the day and feed them and walk them. I think this would show us how to focus on animals and what their life is like and maybe teach us to be nicer to them.… Ideally, the sanctuary has animals that me and the people in my class wouldn't think of as cute. Nontypical farm animals would really force us to get to know them.

Here, I interpret Navy's response as Level 5 because he rejects cuteism, a form of consumerism, demonstrating a higher level of reasoning that respects nonhuman animals beyond their utility as food or possessions. His perspective encapsulates an appreciation for the intrinsic value of all living beings. Navy's stance promotes empathy and respect for animals, emphasizing the importance of understanding them and altering behaviours to enhance relationships with all creatures. His contribution highlights education's capacity to provoke significant shifts in perspectives, fostering a more inclusive human-animal relationship.

Ally

At the beginning of the interview, while discussing home life, Ally disclosed that she and her family sometimes discussed climate change: "Well, we talked about air quality sometimes. We want to make sure we are not polluting too much because we want to stay healthy in Canada." Ally is conscientious about the connection between her actions and their impact on the air quality in Canada (Level 1, Level 3). From this earlier response, I am made aware of Ally's concern for the impact climate change has on her life.

Later in the interview, I asked Ally how her teachers incorporated climate change into the classroom. She recounted,

> We learned that if we do not make big changes to help stop climate change then more and more animals will become extinct and if this happens we will be impacted too. If certain animals die then other animals in that food chain won't have food to eat. This might mean that we won't get to eat certain kinds of meat or have certain animals in zoos anymore or things like that. For example, if the glaciers keep melting where will the penguins, up there, go? I think they will just drown.

When I asked Ally if she could list ways that we could hinder the speed at which our climate is changing she said, "Yeah. We could stop buying from big websites like Amazon and buy from a small business because big companies hurt the planet more. They had factories and flew their product in from anywhere. And animals were just as important as people and deserved to live on a healthy planet." Here, a combination of Level 3 and Level 5 is revealed as Ally demonstrates her concern both for the environment and for the welfare of all animals.

Both at school and at home, Ally is exposed to information about climate change, and the severity of the problem is emphasized to her. At school, teachers focus on the relationship

between climate change and animal extinction. Ally synthesizes this information to conclude that humans may lose access to certain foods as a result of the extinction of animals caused by climate change. Consequently, she believes this could result in her inability to visit these animals at the zoo (Level 1). Furthermore, her thoughts on mitigating climate change highlight the detrimental impact of multinational corporations like Amazon, causing harm to the planet due to their outsourcing practices. In her final sentence, she expresses concern about the well-being of animals and acknowledges that a warming planet would adversely affect their quality of life, indicating that they are undeserving of such dire consequences (Level 5). This final sentence may appear tangential at first glance; nevertheless, it is important to interpret this contribution in light of the concern that Ally demonstrates for animal welfare in other segments of the interview.

Animals are again brought up when Ally is asked to define what being a responsible citizen entails (Level 4). She stipulated

> someone who reduced, reused, and recycled, did not litter, someone who did not hurt animals, and someone who picked up garbage when they saw it because when you picked up garbage it looked nicer and it took years to break down. Animals could eat it and die.… Good citizens stood up for animals. We had to help give back to them. We could adopt old animals or sick ones too if you had the money.

Ally's concern for animals is grounded in her understanding of taking care of the planet (Level 3). She realizes that human actions impact animal life, a notion she revisits when speaking about how her dog made her realize how much she cares about all animals (Level 5). She even admits to feeling guilty about eating meat at times; however, this sentiment is undercut by her concern about not being able to access hamburgers and steak: "If we keep eating animals until they disappear, maybe we will start eating new animals or maybe new kinds will appear.

Well, I think it means more animals will need to be born so we can eat hamburgers and steak" (Level 1). Ultimately, Ally is concerned about climate change and the impact it has on her quality of life (i.e., air quality) and animals' quality of life, but with an emphasis on how these consequences impact her lifestyle. It is evident that she is on the cusp of transitioning into the fourth rationale as her feelings of guilt regarding meat consumption fluctuate and her comprehension of being a good citizen expands to caring for animals.

My argument for Ally's potential to attain Level 5 is highlighted in the final section of the interview. When asked to devise an activity centred on animals for her peers, Ally asserts, "It should probably be about why we should care about and not eat animals as much. Maybe then it should be about pigs, chickens, and cows." Ally proposes that the class collaborate to create plant-based recipes and then share them with all the parents. Her consideration for these animals, which are frequently used for food, and her determination to provide her peers with meal options that do not involve the consumption of any animal products showcases her interest in protecting vulnerable animals. Moreover, her second suggested activity, students adopting a class pet, is once again rooted in fostering a better understanding of human-animal relationships. Students would take turns caring for the pet in their own homes on successive nights. Finally, in her closing remarks, Ally shared, "People should not eat animals as much or use them as food because they have a life too, have babies, make little houses, they eat, and they just get killed and that's sad." Despite the disconnect between her expressed ideas and her ongoing actions, Ally's engagement with the topic indicates that concern for the welfare of all animals is attaining a prominent position within Ally's moral consciousness.

Defensive Discourses

A notable aspect revealed in the interviews is participants' shared awareness of the inadequacy of their advocacy on issues relevant to treatment of and respect for animals. Throughout the discussions, while the participants do not use the term *critical animal studies*, there is a significant presence of disclaimers explaining why they are not advancing a CAS agenda more vigorously. These disclaimers frequently take the form of assertions that such an approach is not integrated into the formal curriculum and that there is insufficient time allotted in the school schedule for delving into these topics.

From the perspective of the students, these disclaimers are understandable, given their limited agency as minors, lacking full rights and decision-making authority to determine curriculum. However, what is striking is the recurrence and similarity of such disclaimers among the teachers. Both social studies and literacy curricula are reported as not accommodating the serious exploration of related themes, and even within citizenship education—a formal part of the Ontario curriculum that could theoretically accommodate such discussions and debates—teachers ascribe a limitation to engagement of topics related to human-animal relationships. Indeed, a striking finding is that across my sample the student participants appear to be at a higher level of consciousness than the teachers about inherently valuing and advocating for nonhuman animal life. These findings will be further examined for their implications in the concluding chapter.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have sought to elucidate how the professional educators and students with whom I have collaborated made sense of the Ontario curriculum's objectives and standards, exploring its practical applications in real classroom settings. To this end, I have used data from

my interviews and CAR collaborations with four participants—two teachers, two students—to reveal variations in level of consciousness and sense of ethical bonding regarding the value of nonhuman animal life and overall animal welfare. My findings underscore the problematic nature of rethinking educational frameworks to enable students and educators to confront and address complex issues within interspecies relations when members of the generation formally charged with reconsidering what it means to be "in this world together," in the words of Braidotti (2016, p. 28), seem less equipped than their charges to address this challenge. Nevertheless, in the final chapter of my dissertation, I attempt to burrow through these difficulties to develop ideas for cultivating a generation of informed and responsible citizens prepared to navigate and contribute to an interconnected world.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

Overview

In this chapter I summarize both stages of findings. The first stage involved a review of different curriculum documents and policy texts wherein nonhuman animals are perceived as commodities and consequently reduced to objects, tools, food, or sources of clothing. Educational policies and the implicit values embedded within curriculum documents shape students' perceptions of nonhuman animals as inherently valueless and incapable. The language employed in curriculum documents systematically prioritizes humans over nonhuman animals, relegating the latter to the status of "other." The prevalent practice of commodifying animals within a neoliberal capitalist society assigns them purpose and value, without which they would be deemed entirely worthless.

In the second stage, I conducted interviews with two teachers and two students as study participants and engaged them in collaborative action research (CAR). I subsequently undertook a critical discourse analysis to uncover diverse levels of consciousness and ethical considerations regarding the value of nonhuman animal life and broader animal welfare concerns. I used CDA to identify the context in which teachers and students conceptualize nonhuman animals, "the ways in which knowledge, subjects, and power relations are produced, reproduced, and transformed within discourse" (Leitch & Palmer, 2010, p. 1195). I chose to represent these relationships using the vehicle of case studies. I also invited my four study participants to develop a lesson that would foster sensitivity and empathy within their respective learning environments. The dialogue created through the collaboration between the researcher and

professional educators and students interrupted the speciesist practices mandated through the curriculum by creating awareness while challenging practices at the micro level.

To recap, to guide my investigation I employ the following three questions as heuristics for exploration:

- How does the discursive content of the Ontario language, social studies, and environmental education curriculum orient students' perceptions of nonhuman animals and their relations with humans?
- How can critical animal studies serve as a tool to disentangle anthropocentric pedagogies, thus helping students question and actively engage with issues so that they can explore their citizenship responsibilities in relation to nonhuman animals?
- What pedagogic approaches have potential for providing a more enlightened perspective on understanding and valuing nonhuman animals?

In Chapters 5 and 6 I discussed the data that inform my first question and, in large part, my second question. In this final chapter, I continue the analysis of my second research question and engage in a more robust analysis of my third question. Additionally, I contemplate the implications of my findings as a contribution to the expanding body of theory and practice regarding CAS, in this manner addressing my third research question. Finally, I provide suggestions for future research and explore the limitations of this study.

Citizenship Education and Consciousness Development

In Chapter 6, I identified five levels of discourse from the interview data (Table 1):

1. anthropocentric concerns;
2. anthropomorphic fantasies;
3. impact on climate and ecosystems;

4. alignment with notions of "good citizen";
5. all species as having dignity and deserving respect.

These discourses may prove useful to assessing the level of consciousness of various stakeholders when developing animal-centred lessons. Level 5, the highest level of consciousness on the scale, was achieved rarely and only by the student participants. Importantly, it was possible for students to move to Level 5 by accessing the language and principles of citizenship education (as opposed to that of environmentalism and/or climate change education, for example).

As explained in Kohlberg and Hersh's (1977) review of Kohlberg's (1971, 1976) six-stage model of moral development, higher moral reasoning demands exposure to moral conflicts that are "not adequately resolved by one's present reasoning structure," so that individuals are more likely "to develop more complex ways of thinking about and resolving such conflicts" (p. 57). The change in one's structure of thought (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977, p. 54) will eventually expose the "inconsistencies and inadequacies in [one's] way of thinking and find ways of resolving them" (p. 57). Further, it is a recognized need to change one's thinking that catapults moral reasoning into the next stage. My teacher participants were unable to change the structure of their thinking because they did not recognize the inadequacy of their thinking about the ethical conflicts presented in this study regarding the value of nonhuman animal life. Conversely, both student participants were able to refine their consciousness about the treatment of nonhuman life. I posit that the teacher participants may have predominantly relied on their rational knowledge, assuming it was sufficient for lesson and curriculum development, whereas the students engaged with the subject matter both emotionally and intellectually, drawing from their emotional experiences as well as factual knowledge. Consequently, it was only the student

participants who were able to reach the fifth and highest level of discourse, All Species as Having Dignity and Deserving Respect (Table 1).

The combined emotional and rational knowledge the fifth level (Table 1) requires echoes Carol Gilligan's (1982) framework of ethics. In her seminal text *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Gilligan critiques Kolhberg's theory of moral development by introducing an alternative framework that incorporates an ethics of responsibility. Gilligan identifies a gap in Kohlberg's findings, which she attributes to his predominantly male participant pool, leading to a skewed understanding of moral progression rooted primarily in rational thinking. According to Gilligan, this approach insufficiently reflects women's moral development.

Gilligan (1982) found that for women there "is an injunction to care, a responsibility to discern and alleviate the 'real and recognizable trouble' of this world" (p. 100). However, she situates care as a binary for women and men: "Women's insistence on care is at first self-critical rather than self-protective, while men initially conceive obligation to others negatively in terms of noninterference" (p. 100). Her work shows that women approach moral issues by critically assessing their own actions and responsibilities in caring for others, whereas men typically view their moral duty as avoiding harm or interference in others' lives. As a result, she suggests a blending of these perspectives: "Development for both sexes would therefore seem to entail an integration of rights and responsibilities through the discovery of the complementarity of these disparate views" (p. 100). Gilligan's work thus includes a more holistic and inclusive view of human experience.

In line with Gilligan's (1982) argument, CAS values both rational and emotional knowledge. For example, by sharing disturbing and graphic images of mass farming, CAS aims

to evoke an emotional response that, in turn, deepens our moral obligation and responsibility towards these nonhuman animals being slaughtered. On the other hand, CAS also values sharing images that portray loving and care-filled relationships between animals and humans to highlight the potential for positive human-animal relationships. Through the combination of emotional and rational knowledge, CAS aims to cultivate a more compassionate and responsible society where individuals are equipped to critically question and challenge harmful dominant perspectives on human-animal relationships. Thus, in relation to moral development, CAS contributes to a broader movement towards a kind of citizenship that is empathetic and oriented towards society in our interactions with nonhuman animals.

Notwithstanding my earlier critique of Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) three-tiered framework of citizenship education, this discursive framework, likely because it was a structure with which students were already familiar, seemed to provide participants with a portal through which it was possible to reconsider the value of nonhuman animal life. The interview data revealed that both teacher and student participants considered the protection of animals a nonnegotiable tenet of being a responsible citizen. Therefore, it may be that through the implementation of a more comprehensive citizenship curriculum, a shift in mindset could become attainable.

My hope is—and the data suggest—that citizenship education could be a conduit to the kind of reasoning that allows individuals to achieve a higher level of consciousness with regard to the treatment of nonhuman animals. Ms. Davis actually drew a direct connection between valuing animal life and the Graduate Expectation of being a responsible citizen when she asserted, "I think for a lot of people learning to care about animals seems so foreign because animals are only seen as food or something to help us live easier. So if we care, like actually

care, about animals and wanting to keep them safe, then we will learn that taking care of the planet and everything on it is what we all need to do to survive." Since citizenship education is already instantiated in the formal curriculum, both teachers and students are familiar with the pedagogic discourse of the field and, moreover, are able to relate to the notion in a positive way, both as a strategy to relieve other living creatures from being oppressed and as a way to free themselves from being oppressors. Hence citizenship education could serve as a valuable ally.

My analysis indicated that neither of the teacher participants could be located within the fifth rationale; however, a more structured socialization in the literature related to the treatment of animals could enable both educators and students to develop a higher level of moral reasoning. This is particularly true for those situated more often within the third and fourth levels of the table, because they are adjacent to the higher rationales and therefore better positioned to segue into them. Consistent work within a developmental model has the potential to facilitate this movement, a point to which I return under "Applied Implications."

What do we make of the fact that the student participants, in their role as learners, exhibited greater openness to identifying and revising their thinking than did their teacher counterparts, who encountered more difficulty in embracing the need to adjust their pedagogy? First, such a reordering of priorities on the part of teachers would necessitate acknowledging potential flaws in their perspectives as revealed during the interview process, thereby implicating the efficacy of their teaching methods. Second, a transformed perspective would necessitate considerably more original work on the part of teachers in terms of reimagining the curriculum. These observations may help to explain why teachers' attempts to create animal-centred lessons indicated a lack of value placed on nonhuman animal life, despite the progress demonstrated by

students in this regard. The implications of these findings are further developed in the "Applied Implications" section of this chapter.

Conclusion

Theoretical Implications

CAS and Education. As reported in Chapter 1, there is limited K–12 classroom-based research regarding the advantages of using CAS. Beyond research conducted at the postsecondary level, the CAS body of literature has extensively explored human relationships with nonhuman animals without necessarily offering practical solutions, particularly within K–12 classroom settings. This is where the research conducted in this study makes a significant contribution.

This research study has uncovered citizenship education as a possible pathway to cultivate improved human-animal relationships. If moral dilemmas within this framework are developed, this strategy could lead to a comprehensive understanding of good citizenship as entailing respect for the human treatment of nonhuman animals. Citizenship education could also provide a venue for exploring how normalized human actions, behaviours, and daily activities harm nonhuman animals, fostering a broader discourse on the systemic subjugation of nonhuman animals for human benefit, or revealing ways in which humans are actively complicit in not protecting animals. Good citizenship, then, aligns with Matsuoka and Sorenson's (2023) citing of Gilligan's (1982) definition of an ethics of responsibility as "sustaining connection, seeing the consequences of action by keeping the web of relationships intact (p. 59), and exercising ethics of care." (p. 470). As Gosselin (2003) explains, Gilligan's framework for moral development "reveal[s] a softened boundary between self and other, a boundary where oppression has no home … [and] celebrates the re-creation of a self with the other" (p. 313). The emphasis remains

on interconnectedness and the importance of oppression-free, human-animal relationships. Consequently, such a program would align with the fundamental principles of CAS: the elimination of speciesism and dismantling of hierarchical systems through activist work.

Combining CAS and EPP: An Educational Tool. In this dissertation, CAS has been combined with engaged policy and practices to tackle perhaps the most significant challenge that arose from this study: the dilemma of how to effectively educate both students and educators without unduly burdening them with feelings of guilt regarding their roles as environmental stewards.

As a framework, CAS encompasses principles that demand critical examinations of complex systems of power and ecological interconnectedness, emphasizing the need for holistic and sustainable solutions through activism. CAS has the ability to illuminate injustices and provide a precise language to discuss them, while EPP affords teachers and students the agency to translate the language and action of these identified injustices into meaningful education and then into actionable policies and practices. An example of this from the interview data is Navy's suggestion to bring the class to an animal sanctuary where their contact with the animals, especially ones that are not socially deemed cute and worthy of affection and life, would foster empathy and an intrinsic appreciation for their lives. EPP calls for the active involvement of stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, communities, and students, in interrupting practices and influencing the outcomes of social processes that affect the lives of vulnerable beings. It holds the potential for transformative efforts led by professionals who are actively involved in the process of implementing a desired innovation. By integrating EPP with CAS, educators can facilitate learning experiences that not only critically educate but also inspire action.

Applied Implications

Teacher Training Programs. The interview data illuminated the significant gaps in the educational experiences of the teacher participants. Neither of the participants reported having taken a course that was dedicated to or addressed the significance of nonhuman animal life, especially in relation to issues of climate change. None of the courses offered any form of education on the importance of valuing nonhuman animal life in itself. As a result, when the teacher participants encountered questions on nonhuman animals and their role within the broader discourse on climate change, they relied on media and online sources for information. More interestingly, this lack of formal education on animals was justified by all participants as resulting from the absence of a mandate regarding animal teaching in the Ontario curriculum. However, both teachers made mention of their students' affinity for animals. Ms. Miller specifically emphasized the significant role that her students' pets played in their lives and appreciated the empathy and interest her students expressed for their pets, suggesting that this attitude could be extended to other nonhuman animals if they were thought of or the same characteristics were attributed to them.

Ms. Miller's students' interest in the overlapping characteristics of humans and their pets, or nonhuman animals in general, reveals that humans value similarity over difference and use that to create hierarchies. As a result, educators' pedagogy may benefit from starting with similarities before moving to differences between humans and nonhuman animals. The exploration of difference could foster connection first among humans, promoting an embrace of diversity and eventually leading to learning beyond the human species. An understanding of other species would highlight the various intersectional oppressions—sexism, ableism, classism, racism, ageism, heterosexism—that we perpetuate without recognizing speciesism as the root

justification. I posit that this finding is especially important for the reconceptualization of, or much needed additions to, teacher training programs. Overall, these findings underscore the need for teacher training initiatives to address the oversight of animal education, highlighting the importance of integrating such content into formal educational settings to promote animal welfare awareness and ethical considerations.

Curriculum Revisions. The findings presented in Chapter 5 shed light on the link between the overlap of nonhuman animals and climate change and its relation to the recently integrated environmental education curriculum. Despite mass farming and the widespread commodification of nonhuman animals being among the primary drivers of climate change, the existing curriculum does not mandate teaching about this critical issue. This gap in policy has led to students being left uninformed about a significant aspect of climate change, as teachers are unaware of the necessity of addressing it and, as mentioned above, are not trained to do so. As such, I contend that a revision of the environmental education curriculum is necessary to mandate teaching on the negative ramifications mass farming, slaughtering, and commodifying of nonhuman animals have for the environment. Moreover, there is a need for a thorough examination of the already existing specific expectations that guide teachers to teach about the importance of nonhuman animals only in relation to human life.

Beyond this propositional content, I aim to propose a significant reorientation in terms of curriculum delivery, one that incorporates participatory action research (PAR) alongside the methodology of this dissertation—critical discourse analysis (CDA). This reenvisioned curriculum would be cocreated through a PAR initiative, ensuring the inclusion of diverse perspectives. A PAR approach positions participants as coresearchers, integrating their experiences and social histories to define problems and determine actions aimed at facilitating

widespread transformation (Gillis & Jackson, 2002; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2003; MacDonald, 2012; Maguire, 1987; Schecter & Bell, 2021). Unlike collaborative action research (CAR), PAR enables participants to modify or expand the research agenda and interpret findings, ensuring the engagement of as many voices as possible so that all voices within the community being researched are heard and represented. Here are several ideas:

1. I propose to enlist CDA to create scenarios in the manner of the examples used to illustrate the various discourses in Chapter 6. I would then engage students—either individually or in small groups—in discussion of these various positions and rationales, using these exchanges to expand their "reasoning structures," in Kohlberg's words, so that they can recognize the inadequacies in the current ways of thinking and confront such ethical dilemmas with greater complexity. There are many ways to workshop these findings. One option is to have students discuss the logical ramifications of the various positions contained in the quotes and see if they are comfortable with those goals. Alternatively, discussions could commence from an ideal goal, evaluating whether the positions in the quotes can effectively achieve this objective.
2. Data on participants' human-animal relationships could be collected prior to curriculum implementation and then compared to the data collected after implementation to assess the impact of the curriculum and its delivery. Further, embedded within the units of study, feedback from students and other stakeholders should be collected at various stages to ensure that the curriculum is responsive to the needs and perspectives of the participants. Feedback mechanisms like surveys, focus groups, and reflective journals, would work to

foster a dynamic and inclusive educational environment while enabling continuous refinement of the units of study. The combination of a critical discourse analysis of the feedback with a comparative analysis of the students' self-described analyses of their relationships to nonhuman animals, would provide empirical evidence of changes in participants' perceptions and attitudes and that could in turn better inform the scope of future lessons. This approach could serve to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum in fostering a more nuanced understanding of human-animal relationships.

3. I propose developing workshops to engage students in participatory activities that reflect the principles of PAR. The activities would involve students in the learning process but also empower them to contribute to the creation of knowledge. For instance, students could be asked to identify and share ways to deepen their relationship to nonhuman animals. Alternatively, students could be tasked to identify injustices surrounding the welfare of animals within their communities, then conduct research on these injustices, and finally present a plan of action to combat them. This kind of approach would facilitate a deeper engagement with the animal-centred curriculum, promote critical thinking skills, and have students involved in grassroots activism.
4. The lessons within the animal-centred curriculum would emphasize the interconnectedness of human-animal relationships with broader social, ethical, and environmental issues. By integrating insights from various issues and disciplines, students would gain a holistic understanding of the proposed subject matter. This interdisciplinary approach would encourage students to consider the

wider implications of their learning and actions, to develop solutions that are both ethically and practically sound.

Critical inquiry of this nature would then lead to questions of: *how can I make a change?* This proposed reorientation of curriculum delivery, grounded in PAR and CDA, aims to create a more inclusive, participatory, and critically engaging educational experience for both professional educators and students.

Building Communities of Practice: Youth and Environmentalism. It is important to bear in mind that all initiatives regarding re-visioning the treatment of nonhuman animals need to originate from adult stakeholders. Parallel to the possibility citizenship education holds within formal education to foster moral development and support young people in becoming active participants and leaders in environmental issues either within their community or globally, another significant avenue to pursue is student exposure to youth-led communities of practice. These communities, led by young activists such as Greta Thunberg, consist of individuals within the same age demographic who are engaged in environmental activism. Awareness of these communities, whether through discussions and lessons in classroom settings or via media platforms and word of mouth outside of the classroom, is crucial. These communities and networks of activists convey to students that there is hope for change and can empower them with the belief that they can make a meaningful difference in addressing environmental challenges.

Contributions and Limitations

My research contributes to our understanding of policy enactment, at the micro level, by examining the pedagogy of teachers and their practices, as understood by students. My study confirms that educators are not adequately prepared to teach about nonhuman animals beyond

their instrumental value for humans. This insufficiency persists even though students are eager to untangle the intricate interrelationships between human and nonhuman animal life. However, my study findings also reinforce the potential of collaborative research to bring about authentic changes in individuals' consciousness that could lead to authentic animal-centred pedagogical interventions and, down the road, to beneficial change. For students, another significant benefit could be achieving a level of motivation and engagement in knowing that their contribution to curriculum reenvisioning holds the potential for a significant impact in addressing the challenge of discovering effective educational approaches to promote the valuing of nonhuman animal life.

While CAR offers significant benefits, it also poses several challenges for both researchers and participants. One challenge involves addressing power imbalances and fostering egalitarian relationships between university-based researchers and participants. Another challenge that proved to be particularly relevant in the context of my study was the varying level of knowledge among participants, particularly evident among the teacher participants. This variability impacted the initial research plan and necessitated revisions to enhance the quality of data collection and the cocreation of educational materials. Consequently, achieving sustainable outcomes, particularly in implementing animal-centred units of study and lessons codeveloped by students, remains uncertain beyond the research phase.

My study has several other possible limitations. This research represents a limited experience within a specific time frame during a global pandemic. Classroom observations, as outlined in my original pre-Covid research design, would have provided a much richer and more complex understanding of the ways in which teachers extend and transform policy within their classrooms. Moreover, I would have been able to observe the ways in which nonhuman animals were discussed in Grade 6 and Grade 8 classrooms, rather than only relying on the accounts of

the participants. As well, this research was conducted with participants who either taught or attended a Catholic school. Moreover, no male teachers were interviewed. These factors, contributing to a homogeneous participant pool, could have contributed to the shared understandings among participants regarding the moral imperative (or lack thereof) of protecting nonhuman animals as an aspect of responsible citizenship.

Finally, my positionality and personal biases may have influenced me to overestimate the implications of particular language usages while analyzing the participants' narratives of their relationships with nonhuman animals and their perceptions of their intrinsic worth.

Areas for Future Research

In addition to the need to experiment with innovative curriculum design of the kind I have proposed in previous sections, further research is needed on the kinds of professional development that could assist in-service teachers with the knowledge and tools they need to successfully educate their students on the broad scope of the issues addressed in this dissertation. Additionally, research on the impact of schoolwide initiatives, student-led activist-based projects, and after-school environmental clubs would contribute to a repositioning of information on best practices for fostering human-animal relationships and teaching environmental stewardship. Moreover, it would be beneficial to compare the findings from this study with data collected from teachers and students at a forest school. This comparison would offer valuable insight into the potential impact of different educational settings and approaches on attitudes towards animals and citizenship responsibilities.

A Return to the Beginning

The power of our words is endless, and even more so when they come from the mouths of educators. I hope that with this dissertation I have inspired just one person to truly consider

the way in which we choose to speak, or not speak, about animals within our classrooms or wherever we are teaching. With that, and the belief that change is possible, I hope a shift in thinking will lead more of us to collectively partake in animal activism.

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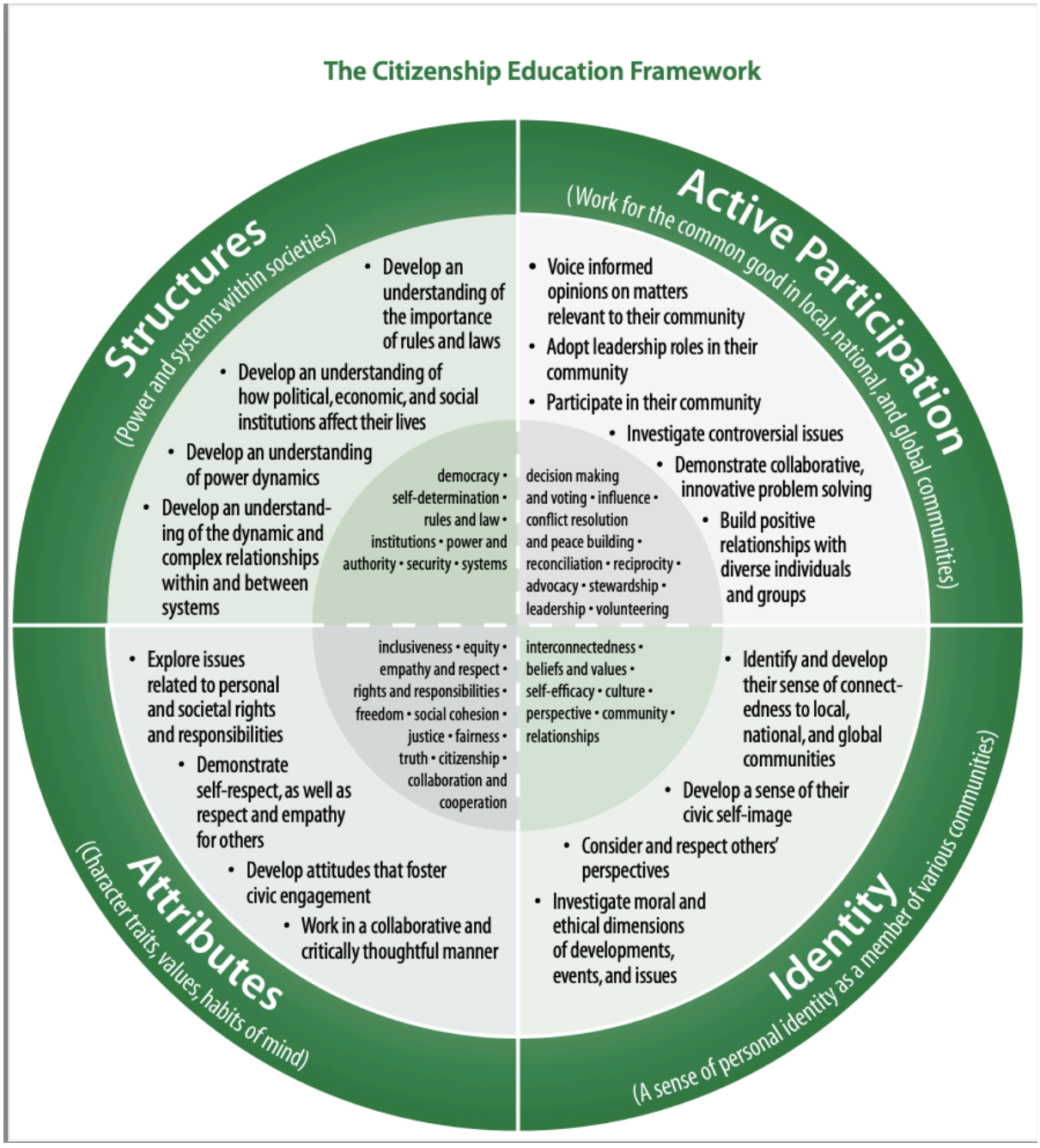
Appendix A: The Citizenship Education Framework



Appendix B: Teacher Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol: Teachers

Demographic Information:

Name:

Years Teaching:

Length of Contract:

Life at Home:

How many individuals live in your home? Are there any pets?

Who does the cooking primarily?

Explain what a typical meal looks like at dinner time. Do you or any members of your household have a special diet?

Background:

Can you tell me a little about your childhood?

Did you spend a lot of time outdoors?

Did your parents read you stories about animals? Do you have children?

What are books about animals you have read to them?

Work Life:

How many students do you teach each day?

What subjects do you cover?

How much planning time are you given?

What are some overall or "graduate" expectations of students within your board?

How familiar are you with the language and social studies curriculum?

Do you discuss curriculum with coworkers? How often?

Pedagogy: Language

How often do you read, listen or watch texts that include animals for language?

How are these animals depicted? Are they given human qualities? Are they the main characters?

Out of reading, writing, oral and media, which strand do you think is the most important? The least?

Which strand do you spend the least amount of time giving structured lesson and assessments? Why do you think that?

Pedagogy: Social Studies

I know that the grade you currently teach focuses heavily on climate change. Are animals ever included in this conversation? Explain.

Do you know if it is a curriculum expectation for you to include animals, in any aspect, within your lessons?

Do you see a space for educating about nonhuman animals as part of citizenship education?

Interspecies Relationality:

What was your first recollection that entails the relationship between human to nonhuman animals?

What kinds of things do you know about animals?

Where do you learn about animals?

Who teaches you about animals? What things do they teach you about?

Do you know any stories about animals? Tell me about it.

Can you think of places that different kinds of animals live? Tell me a story about one or more of those animals' lives.

What kinds of animals do you see in your life?

What do you know about these animals? Prompt: Where have you seen them?

Video:

Why is the child in the video upset?

In the middle of the clip the child says "I don't want to eat horseys" and the parent responds, "We don't eat horses. We only eat turkeys and chickens and pigs and cows." Why do you think

the parent says this? And the girl responds “But pigs are nice and chickens are nice and cows are nice.” Why do you think the child responds this way?

The child says “I don’t like that farmers chop people up.” The parent says “They don’t chop people up.” And the child corrects themselves by saying “I don’t like that they chop animal-people up.” How does the parent view animals? How does the child view animals?

The child is worrying about all animals disappearing because we keep eating them. What other possible impact could eating animals have?

Do you think that a child should have a say in whether they want to eat animals or not?

Previous Knowledge:

Have you ever taken a course about animals in any capacity? Explain.

Do you recall your teacher training addressing the relationship between human and animal?

Citizenship:

What are the guidelines of a good citizen? What is the role of a teacher in preparing students to become good citizens? What is the role of a good citizen in relation to the protection of animals?

Applied Implications:

If you were to design a language unit including nonhuman animals, what would the unit look like?

If you were to design a social studies unit including nonhuman animals, what would the unit look like?

Let’s design a lesson together that centres the animal.

Is there anything you would like to tell me about what we have been talking about that you would like to ask?

Appendix C: Student Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol: Students

Demographic Information:

Name:

Age:

Grade:

Life at Home:

How many individuals live in your home? Are any pets?

Do you have a say in what you eat for breakfast, lunch or dinner?

Who does the cooking primarily?

Explain what a typical meal looks like at dinnertime.

Do you or any members of your household have a special diet?

Do you talk with your family or siblings about current issues like climate change?

Background:

Can you tell me a little about your childhood?

Do you spend a lot of time outdoors?

Do your parents read you stories about animals?

Do you have siblings?

What are books about animals you have read to them?

School Life:

Is your school public, denomentational, or private?

How long have you been going to this school?

What does the typical school day look like for you?

What is your favourite subject? Why?

Do you remember the first time you learned about animals in school? Tell me about it.

Does your school host any fundraisers or initiatives to help a particular cause? What are those causes?

Do your teachers talk about those initiatives in class?

Language Learning:

Do you remember the first book you ever read? Tell me about it.

How often do you read, listen or watch texts that include animals for language?

How are these animals depicted? Are they given human qualities? Are they the main characters?

Out of reading, writing, oral and media, which strand do you think is the most important? The least?

Which strand do you spend the least amount of time learning about? Why do you think that?

Social Studies:

Does your teacher let your questions guide the lesson or do they come into the class with the material already prepared?

When you learn about climate change in class, does your teacher include animals in the conversation? Explain.

Do you think it is important to consider the impact climate change has on animals' lives? Why?

Citizenship:

What are the qualities of a good citizen?

What is the role of a teacher in preparing students to become good citizens?

What is the role of a good citizen in relation to the protection of animals?

Interspecies Relationality:

When do you first remember thinking about your relationship to animals?

What kinds of things do you know about animals?

Where do you learn about animals?

Who teaches you about animals?

What things do they teach you about?

Do you know any stories about animals? Tell me about it.

Can you think of places that different kinds of animals live? Tell me a story about one or more of those animals' lives.

What kinds of animals do you see in your life?

What do you know about these animals? Prompt: where have you seen them?

Video:

Why is the child in the video upset?

In the middle of the clip the child says "I don't want to eat horseys" and the parent responds, "We don't eat horses. We only eat turkeys and chickens and pigs and cows." Why do you think the parent says this? And the girl responds "But pigs are nice and chickens are nice and cows are nice." Why do you think the child responds this way?

The child says "I don't like that farmers chop people up." The parent says "They don't chop people up." And the child corrects themselves by saying "I don't like that they chop animal-people up." How does the parent view animals? How does the child view animals?

The child is worrying about all animals disappearing because we keep eating them. What other possible impact could eating animals have?

Do you think that a child should have a say in whether they want to eat animals or not?

Applied Implications:

Let's design a project or activity that focuses on animals that you could imagine yourself working on in class.

Is there anything you would like to tell me about what we have been talking about that you would like to ask?

Appendix D: Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Date:

Study Name:
ENGAGING WITH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ON THE ONTARIO CURRICULUM AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN AND NONHUUMAN ANIMALS: A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

Researcher Name:
My name is Alyssa Racco. I am a Year 3 Doctoral candidate at York University's Faculty of Education. I am the Principal Investigator for this study. My email address is alyssa_racco@edu.yorku.ca.

Purpose of the Research:
The purpose of this research is to identify the role education has in developing the relationship between humans and nonhuman animals. The study will explore whether and how teachers include nonhuman animals within their pedagogy and identify educational needs in this regard. Findings will be presented and analyzed in a Thesis Dissertation.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:
Participants will be responsible for responding to all questions in an interview. The total estimated time commitment for each participant is one hour. An inducement of $50 is offered to all participants.

This study will use Zoom to collect data, which is an externally hosted cloud-based service. When information is transmitted over the internet privacy cannot be guaranteed. There is always a risk your responses may be intercepted by a third party (e.g., government agencies, hackers). Further, while York University researchers will not collect or use IP addresses or other information which could link your participation to your computer or electronic devices without informing you, FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES 283 York Lanes 4700 Keele Street Toronto Ontario Canada M3J 1P3 Tel 416 736-2100 Fax 416 736-5592 www.yorku.ca/gradsthere is a small risk with any platform such as this of data that is collected on external servers falling outside the control of the research team. If you are concerned about this, we would be happy to make alternative arrangements (where possible) for you to participate, perhaps via telephone. You also have the option to not be audio or video recorded. Please contact the researcher for further information.

Recordings (audio/video) will be saved in a password protected file to research team members' local computer, not the cloud based service

Please note that it is the expectation that participants agree not to make any unauthorized recordings of the content of a meeting / data collection session.

Risks and Discomforts:
We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in this research.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:
Participants may gain useful knowledge about nonhuman animals while thinking critically about the current curriculum expectations. Participants may also gain innovative lesson ideas and activities to implement within their own classroom.

Voluntary Participation Withdrawal:
Your decision not to volunteer, to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship you may have with the researchers or study staff, or the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future.

This research has received ethics review and approval by the Delegated Ethics Review Committee, which is delegated authority to review research ethics protocols by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York

University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, Kaneff Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

If you decide to stop participating, you may do so without penalty, financial or otherwise, and you will still receive the promised inducement.

In the event that you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Should you wish to withdraw after the study, you will have the option to also withdraw your data up until the analysis is complete.

Confidentiality:

- Methods of documentation include an audio recording, handwritten notes, and a survey
- All hard copy data will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet. All electronic data will be securely stored in a password protected device
- Data will be destroyed permanently by June 2028
- Data will not be archived.

Unless you choose otherwise, all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of research data. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility and all electronic data will be stored in a password protected device, and only the principal researcher will have access to this information. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions About the Research?

If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact me at alyssa_racco@edu.yorku.ca. You may also contact the Graduate Program in the Faculty of Education at gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca and/or 416-736-5018.

This research has received ethics review and approval by the Delegated Ethics Review Committee, which is delegated authority to review research ethics protocols by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and confirms the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, Kaneff Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or email ore@yorku.ca)

Legal Rights and Signature:
Note: if you are under 18, your legal guardian must provide consent

I_____ consent to participate in THE ONTARIO LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN AND NONHUMAN ANIMALS conducted by Alyssa Racco. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature_____ **Date**_____
Participant

Signature_____ **Date**_____
Guardian of Participant (if under 18)

Signature_____ **Date**_____
Principal Investigator

Appendix E: Assent Form

Child Participant Assent Form

Date:

Study Name:
ENGAGING WITH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ON THE ONTARIO CURRICULUM AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN AND NONHUMAN ANIMALS: A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

Researcher Name:
My name is Alyssa Racco. I am a Year 3 Doctoral candidate at York University's Faculty of Education. I am in charge of this project. My email address is alyssa_racco@edu.yorku.ca.

Purpose of the Research:
The purpose of this research is to explore the ways education shapes our relationship with animals. The study will look into the ways, if any at all, that teaches incorporate animals in their lessons.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:
You will be asked to participate in an interview. The interview will be about one-hour long. You will be paid $50 for completing the interview.

This study will use Zoom to collect data, which is an externally hosted cloud-based service. When information is transmitted over the internet privacy cannot be guaranteed. There is always a risk your responses may be intercepted by a third party (e.g., government agencies, hackers). Further, while York University researchers will not collect or use IP addresses or other information which could link your participation to your computer or electronic devices without informing you, FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES 283 York Lanes 4700 Keele Street Toronto Ontario Canada M3J 1P3 Tel 416 736-2100 Fax 416 736-5592 www.yorku.ca/gradsthere is a small risk with any platform such as this of data that is collected on external servers falling outside the control of the research team. If you are concerned about this, we would be happy to make alternative arrangements (where possible) for you to participate, perhaps via telephone. You also have the option to not be audio or video recorded. Please contact the researcher for further information.

Recordings (audio/video) will be saved in a password protected file to research team members' local computer, not the cloud based service

Please note that it is the expectation that participants agree not to make any unauthorized recordings of the content of a meeting / data collection session.

Risks and Discomforts:
We do not see any risks or discomfort.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:

Benefits include learning more about animals and thinking about new ways to include them into your learning.

Voluntary Participation Withdrawal:
Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. If you decide to stop being a part of the study, you will still receive $50.

If you decide to not be part of the study, all information collected from you will be destroyed.

Confidentiality:

- Methods of documentation include an audio recording, handwritten notes, and a survey
- All hard copy data will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet. All electronic data will be securely stored in a password protected device
- The data I collect from you will be destroyed permanently by June 2028

Unless you choose otherwise, all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of research data. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility and all electronic data will be stored in a password protected device, and only the principal researcher will have access to this information. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions About the Research?
If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact me at alyssa_racco@edu.yorku.ca. You may also contact the Graduate Program in the Faculty of Education at gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca and/or 416-736-5018.

Legal Rights and Signature:
Note: if you are under 18, your legal guardian must provide consent

I_____ consent to participate in THE ONTARIO LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN AND NONHUMAN ANIMALS study conducted by Alyssa Racco. I understand the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature_____ **Date**_____
Participant

Signature_____ **Date**_____
Guardian of Participant (if under 18)

Signature_____ **Date**_____

Principal Investigator