



Salisbury  
UNIVERSITY

Honors College

Honors Thesis



An Honors Thesis Titled

Man's Best Friend or Man's Biggest Profit: How the Economy  
Encourages Violence Towards Dogs

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors Designation to the

Honors College

of

Salisbury University

in the Major Department of

Political Science

by

Jessica Keister

Date and Place of Oral Presentation: NCUR Spring 2018

Signatures of Honors Thesis Committee

Mentor: Sarah Surak

[Signature]

Reader 1: Lauren Hill

Lauren Hill

Reader 2: Grace Clement

Grace Clement

Director: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Print

Man's Best Friend, or Man's Biggest Profit: How the Economy Encourages Violence  
Towards Dogs

Jessica Keister  
Salisbury University

Man's Best Friend, or Man's Biggest Profit: How the Economy Encourages Violence  
Towards Dogs

In 2001, professional football player Michael Vick, along with three of his friends, started a dogfighting business titled "Bad Newz Kennels" based out of Virginia. In their business they bought and used pitbulls and other dog breeds for fighting, solely for profit and entertainment. Information from a federal indictment states the many obscenities that the dogs in Vick's business faced, in order for the business to flourish. For example, if a dog did not win a fight and make money for its owner, he/she was immediately executed. Vick killed the dogs by hanging, electrocution, drowning, slamming to the ground until the dog eventually died, or breaking the dog's back or neck (Derber & Magrass, 2016, p. 65).

The unlucky dogs that survived and continued to participate in fights faced even more brutality. In order to make the dogs better fighters, they had to be tortured so that they were aggressive. In order to make the dog's aggressive, a lot of abuse ensues. On Vick's property, there was a torture chamber that was used to train the dogs for fighting. In the chamber, police found around 54 desperately underfed dogs with scars and various injuries, dogs chained to car axles, being tempted to fight with one another, and the bloody area where the fighting took place. These dogs were also given many performance enhancing drugs so that they could continue to push through and fight, even with their extensive injuries. They also discovered a "rape stand," which was used on female dogs who were seen as too aggressive. The stand forced the female dog to submit to male dogs for breeding, by strapping the dog down, putting her head into restraints, and forcing her to be raped. *The New York Times* wrote an article on the lives of Vick's dogs after they were rescued from the dogfighting property. They found that one dog's teeth were all removed, probably so that she would not

injure the other dog while on the rape stand during the brutal breeding process (Macur, 2008).

When the ASPCA was able to finally rescue the dogs from Vick, they witnessed the horrible shape the dogs were in. In particular, they described the “pancake dogs,” who could not even be in the presence of a human without completely flattening themselves to the ground, trembling with fear. While these descriptions of what went on in Vick’s business are obviously horrendous, the business still flourished. One dogfight could make up to \$26,000 for the business. (Derber & Magrass, 2016, p. 65-66).

While the business began in 2001, it was not until 2007 that authorities found out about the dogfighting, while they were searching Vick’s property for a different crime. When interviewed about the crimes Vick committed, fellow NFL player Clinton Portis defended Vick’s actions and denied that dog fighting is a crime. Portis said that charging Vick for dogfighting would be “putting him behind bars for no reason (“Animal Fighting Case Study: Michael Vick”). Portis also felt that the dogs were Vick’s property therefore, he could do whatever he wanted to them. After 18 months, Vick was released from prison and began his life as usual, being welcomed back into the NFL and given a \$1.6 million salary with the Philadelphia Eagles. In 2017, Vick was hired as a commentator for Fox Sports. Even after all of the cruel crimes he committed, Vick is still able to be a successful member of society, while the many dogs he abused are either dead, or physically and mentally scarred from the abuse they faced. Also, even though Vick’s business was shut down, there are still today many other dogs still facing the abuse and brutality from the dog fighting industry.

Michael Vick’s case is one instance of an epidemic that is prevalent all across the country, in spite of being illegal in all 50 states. Along with the business of dogfighting, dogs

are being abused in many other industries that involve dogs. This abuse also occurs in the dog breeding and puppy mill businesses. While the horrendous example of Michael Vick is an obviously extreme example of a specific case, it does not take away from the fact that these atrocities still occur all throughout society. Everyday people would outright condemn the act of dogfighting or the abuse that the dog's puppy mill breeders face. Even if we condemn those acts, we still indulge in the violence that we seem to criticize. This is shown in Vick's successful career on television or how we still purchase animals from abusive breeders.

The prevalence and normality of businesses abusing dogs in our society has much deeper roots that one would think. In their book *Bully Nation*, Charles Derber and Yale R. Magrass argue that the bullying mentality that exists in our society negatively affects human-human relations, and human-animal relations. Furthermore, our institutions are what reinforce this bullying mentality. Derber and Magrass (2016) write how "we need a larger picture showing how key institutions in society... all help create and perpetuate the bullying milieu" (p. 2) Our capitalist economic system is an example of an institution that perpetuates and normalizes abuse in society, particularly abuse to dogs in the various industries they work in.

The principles of our capitalist economic system affect how we treat animals. Specifically, the relationship between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, private property, commodification, profit, and self-alienation of workers, are all mirrored and most literally represented in Vick's case. These help to legitimize the right of the small number of powerful people at the top, the bourgeois, to abuse the animal workers in the industry, the proletariat. In the various industries, like the dogfighting business, that are ruled by the bourgeois, dogs

are considered property, not as living beings, so they are thrown into the harsh capitalist machine to be used and abused for human gain. In using the term property, we mean that dogs are seen as tools to be used in production to make further profit, instead of living beings. As Vick's teammate Clinton Portis said, if something is our property, we can do anything to it, even if that means inciting horrific abuse on living animals for our own gain.

Since the dogs are viewed as property, they are commodified so that they can produce the highest amount of profit for the business, while costing the least amount of time and money to maintain. In Vick's case, this commodification is shown in the use of performance enhancing drugs, and the abuse the animals faced in order to make them more aggressive fighters. The more aggressive and athletic, the better they perform. Dogs who cannot perform are executed.

In viewing dogs as commodities instead of living beings, the thoughts and feelings of the dog are ignored. In the commodification process, dogs completely lose their sense of self and self-reliance. As Nibert (2013) writes, animals are "sentient beings with emotional lives, strong preferences and desires, and profound social bonds. However, the individuality and personality of each is ignored by the humans who benefit from their mistreatment and death" (p. 4). When dog's whole lives are so dedicated to work and production, they do not know what it is like to feel positive emotions, like love and happiness. Instead, they are brainless and miserable machine-like slaves to their labor. Vick's view of his dogs as brainless machines is what allows him to view them as property, rather than living beings that do not deserve abuse for profit. The fact that the "pancake" dogs Vick created cowered into the ground at the sight of a human, shows that they never experienced love and caring before,

like all animals deserve. Instead of experiencing positive feelings of love and care, the “pancake” dogs are simply commodities to be used for capitalist profit.

Our capitalist society propagates not only the atrocities such as those enacted by Michael Vick, but many more other atrocities that dogs face every day in our society. Specifically, capitalism encourages this horrific treatment through supporting puppy mills, dog fighting, and dog breeding. In these various industries, dogs suffer great abuse from profit-seeking businesses in capitalism, all for the sake of human gain, profit, and entertainment. Before capitalism came to be, various philosophers also posed the question of how humans and animals relate. Capitalism takes these ideas that were discussed by philosophers and uses them to perpetuate animal abuse, all in the name of profit.

### **The Importance of Animal Rights in Society**

The call for more attention and protection towards animals around the world is not a new idea. As of recently, it is gaining a global profile. The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and Stop Animal Exploitation NOW! (SAEN), are a few of the influential animal activist groups that exist today. Along with those activist groups, the animal rights movement is also gaining momentum in the political sphere. In 2002, the Party for the Animals was founded in the Netherlands, and even gained two seats in the parliament in 2006. This is the first party that gained seats in a parliament, with a main agenda that focused on animal rights, among other topics (Bekoff, 2010, p. 179). Also, in 2008 the European Parliament adopted a declaration urging the European Union to enact a change to their regulations of the use of animals in research, with a potential ban of the use of apes in invasive research (Bekoff, 2010, p. 179). Approximately 48 cities in Spain, including Barcelona, have declared themselves as anti-bullfighting. In a recent survey

conducted on bullfighting, 72% of Spaniards have no interest in bullfighting, and only 8% of Spaniards identify as supporters of bullfighting (Bekoff, 2010, p. 180). These statistics show how society is becoming more aware of the atrocities that animals face today.

While many groups are participating in the fight for animal rights, people are skeptical as to just how much emphasis we should put into helping abused animals. Moral philosopher Peter Singer takes an interesting approach to addressing skeptics of the animal rights movement. Specifically, Singer (2009) mentions the belief that since men and women are similar they should have the same rights. Following this logic, since humans and nonhumans are different, does this mean that they do not need to have equal rights (p. 2)? While there are obvious differences between humans and animals, there are still changes to be made. Singer (2009) pushes back against skeptics when he writes how, “the basic principle of equality does not require equal or identical treatment; it requires equal consideration” (p. 2). My argument is grounded in this approach. Fighting for animal’s rights and recognition is not calling for animals to be treated exactly like humans; rather it is instead a movement to recognize that animals still have a right to have their feelings and environments considered. How similar or different humans are from animals should have no effect on how we treat them. We must end the belief that just because something is “different” from us, we can abuse, it. These rights that animals deserve are abused every day in capitalism.

Abuse that happens to animals stems from the same hierarchical views that people have, resulting in abuses towards both humans and animals. While there are many people that are susceptible to facing abuse every day in society, there are also animals that are subject to that same abuse. In his work, David Nibert, the father of critical animal studies, addresses

the multitude of issues with regard to human-animal relations. Nibert (2002) explains the connection between human abuse and animal abuse as “the exploitation of other animals and the justification of their mistreatment not only closely resemble human oppression but are inextricably tied to it” (p. 3). Abuse towards animals is just a part of the bigger picture of the abuse that occurs towards those that are most vulnerable in society today. For example, studies show that there is a strong connection between abuse towards animals and abuse towards other humans. According to Charles Derber and Yale R. Magrass (2016), violent criminals and murderers often started off abusing animals (p. 66). High school students Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, known for committing the infamous and deadly Columbine High School shooting, spoke prior to their classmates about mutilating animals (Derber and Magrass, 2016, p. 67). Furthermore, men who abuse their children and wives are likely animal abusers as well (Derber and Magrass, 2016, p. 67). Specifically, in three separate studies more than half of the women surveyed reported that their partner either abused or threatened to abuse their pets too (Derber and Magrass, 2016, p. 67). These examples unveil the grim reality that animal abuse and other types of violence that plague our society are wound tightly together.

As mentioned above, there is a lot of correlation between violence towards animals, and violence towards other members of society. It seems illogical to fight for non-violence towards humans, yet continue to violently abuse animals. In the end, all of these instances are obviously atrocious. Abuse is abuse, and it should not be tolerated in society, whether animal or human. Instances of abuse all relate back to the ways that economic, political, and ideological systems of our society function today (Nibert, p. 3, 2002). Specifically, these systems that govern our everyday life are systems that, “rely on oppressive and violent

practices to protect and expand privilege” (Nibert, p. 3, 2002). If we are able to change the way people in society view those that are “lesser” than them, whether that “lesser” being is a human or an animal, the world will be a better place for all of us.

While there are many activist groups that fight for the rights of animals, more remains to be done. By offering relief and assistance to animals, these groups are mending the problems that come from the abusive capitalist system. This thesis aims to go even further, by attacking the problem itself, rather than the outcome of the problem. In doing so I will analyze why our society allows capitalism to continue to function and abuse its workers. Bekoff cites a quote from Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel summarizing the importance of calling out the abuse that animals face every day, and fighting for change. Bekoff (2010) writes how Wiesel emphasized to, “take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented” (p. 199). If we remain silent on the abuses that animals face in capitalism, no change will occur. We need to bring to light all of the atrocities, and then change will eventually follow.

Before identifying the relationship of capitalism to animal welfare, we first must first look at the theories and philosophies that preceded capitalism, and also allowed for society to obtain the mindset that animal abuse and exploitation is acceptable. Once the background information is established, we can begin to work through the many facets of capitalism. From explaining the basic principles that make up capitalism, analyzing the Marxist critiques of capitalism, and then relating these critiques of capitalism to animals in particular. In looking at the Marxist critiques of capitalism, we will also bring up similar theories that came out of the ideas of Marx. The theories of domination, social ecology, and ecofeminism, all stem from the Marxist critique of capitalism, and can also be applied to human-animal relations.

### Where the Problems Began: The Philosophical Debate

*“The alien has never once attempted to talk with me. It has been with me, watched me, touched, handled me, for days: but all its motions have been purposeful, not communicative. It is evidently a solitary creature, totally self-absorbed. This would go far to explain its cruelty.”*

-“Mazes” by Ursula Leguin

In addressing the theoretical issues of human-animal relations, we must start at the roots with the various philosophical viewpoints of animals in society. Specifically, we will start by looking at where the separation of humans and animals in society originated. As human-animal relations theorist Bob Torres (2007) writes “our domination of animals occurs at both ideological and material levels” (p. 4). We feel that the philosophical ideologies about how we should view animals is the root cause of the abuse animals face today. The opinions of philosophers, from Aristotle and the ancient Greeks beginning in the fourth century to John Locke and Immanuel Kant in the 20th century, vary on how they explain human-animal relations. The convictions of those like Aristotle and Descartes carry over into the religious beliefs of our modern era, further stating the belief that animals are solely for human use and abuse. Finally we must consider various theories that explain why we place humans fundamentally above animals in all aspects of society, namely human exceptionalism and speciesism. All of these different pieces come together to influence how we think today, with regard to our value of animal life.

There are many different sides to the arguments of how animals should be treated in society. These various arguments are initially shown in philosophical ideas, which then influenced religious thought, and then influenced modern theories used today. On one end of the spectrum is the belief that animals are not rational beings due to their lack of the ability to speak. Therefore, if a being is not rational, their purpose in life is to serve humans. On the

opposite of the spectrum is those who believe that animals deserve to live a peaceful life free of slavery to humans. Along with this is the belief that animals are in fact sentient beings and regardless of whether they are rational beings or not, they deserve to be safe from harm. In the middle of this spectrum is the belief that even though animals are not rational beings, they still have rights to be protected from harm. These varying sides of the argument play a role in how we view animals in society today.

### **The Influence of Philosophical Thought on Animal Abuse**

In western culture, philosophers have been debating the value of animals in society since the ancient Greeks of the fourth century BCE, much prior to the modern ideas used today (DeMello, 2012, p. 378). Aristotle believed that the fact that humans have the power to speak leads us to believe that humans are rational beings (DeMello, 2012, p. 378). Furthermore, since animals lack the ability to speak, they should serve humans (DeMello, 2012, p. 378 & Rasmussen, 2011, p. 103). The word serve insinuates that their only purpose is to work for and please humans. The fact that Aristotle viewed animals as solely for human use and service, places them further beneath humans. The more humans see animals as below us, the more abuse that occurs. Jean Harvey (2017) discusses the belief that the sole purpose of animals is to serve humans when she writes how the value of animals is, “merely instrumental, and their role in the natural order of things is to be of use to humans” (p. 3-4). Peter Singer further discusses Aristotle’s role in perpetuating animal abuse with his hierarchical beliefs. Specifically, Singer (2009) writes how Aristotle believed that, “plants exist for the sake of animals, and brute beasts for the sake of man” (p. 189). Aristotle’s philosophical arguments immediately set up the hierarchical beliefs that still run society today, and allow for capitalism to persist.

17th century philosopher Rene Descartes had similar beliefs to Aristotle, arguing that, “the mentality and the ability to speak were the primary characteristics separating humans from animals” (DeMello, 2012, p. 380). Descartes furthered Aristotle’s initial argument, by insinuating that since animals could not speak, they were essentially machines (DeMello, 2012, p. 380; Francione & Garner, 2010, p. 6; Rasmusen, 2011, p. 103). Specifically, Descartes considered animals “mindless automata that operate without higher thought or consciousness” (DeMello, 2012, p. 380). Descartes went so far in his belief of animals as machines as to dissect dogs while they were still alive, and said that their screams were actually the noises made by machines, not rational beings (DeMello, 2012, p. 380). Legal scholar Gary L. Francione extends Descartes’ argument that animals are more like machines than living beings, by comparing a clock and an animal. Francione (2000) argues that if someone were to damage a clock that a person owned, or a pet that a person owned, their reaction would be the same (p. 2). The negative reaction stems from the fact that the person’s property was damaged, not from the fact that the pet was hurt in the process (Francione, 2000, p. 2). Since the pet is seen more as a machine than a rational being, it does not matter if you cause it any pain. Aristotle and Descartes make the connection between speech ability, thought, and rationality. If a being has the ability to speak, it also has thoughts, in turn making it a rational being. Those characteristics define what beings humans can and cannot abuse.

Philosophical thought began to merge more towards support for animal life when the thoughts of John Locke, and Immanuel Kant emerged, but not completely. Unlike previous philosophers, both Locke and Kant felt that cruelty to animals was wrong, but looked at it more from the perspective of humans than animals (DeMello, 2012, p. 380-381). They felt

that, “cruelty to animals was wrong, but only because engaging in it is bad for people” (DeMello, 2012, p. 380). So they did feel that abuse to animals was wrong, unlike Descartes and Aristotle, but only because it was not good for the human. Still, we are stuck in the mindset that puts the needs and rights of animals below humans. This hierarchical way of thinking further perpetuates the abuse that animals face. Kant also looked at the relationship between animals and rationality, like Aristotle and Descartes, but looked at it more from the angle of decision making, rather than speech ability. Kant argued that, “rationality and autonomy were the key characteristics separating humans from other animals” (DeMello, 2012, p. 381). Furthermore, since animals are not able to make their own rational decisions, they have no moral standing in society (DeMello, 2012, p. 381 & Harvey, 2017, p. 3, Rasmussen, 2011, p. 105). Kant did feel that animals are able to make decisions, but not rational ones that involve making an informed decision for a certain course of action (DeMello, 2012, p. 381). With this, Kant argued that, “animals have no autonomy and thus no intrinsic value, and humans owe them nothing” (DeMello, 2012, p. 381; Singer, 2009, p. 203). Kant makes the argument that since animals are not able to make rational decisions, they should still be seen as subservient to humans in society.

A sharp contrast from the beliefs of Aristotle, Descartes, and Kant is the philosophy known as theriophily, which states that animals do possess rationality (DeMello, 2012, p. 379). Theriophily was the belief of Greek philosophers Pythagoras and Plutarch. Pythagoras lived as a vegetarian and believed that animals had a right to live in peace with the rest of mankind, not as slaves like Aristotle believed (DeMello, 2012, p. 378; Singer, 2009, p. 189). Moreover, philosopher Plutarch continued the ideas set by Pythagoras in his essay titled, “Of Eating Flesh,” arguing for animal rights and recognition. Plutarch writes, “but for the sake of

some little mouthful of flesh, we deprive a soul of the sun and light” and how, “the voices it utters and screams forth to us are nothing else but uncertain inarticulate sounds and noises, and not the several deprecations, entreaties, and pleadings of each of them” (DeMello, 2012, p. 379). Plutarch’s quote shows how when we abuse animals, we are not simply abusing some mindless machine. This abuse is happening to living, breathing, and feeling beings.

French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau agreed with aspects of both Kant, Pythagoras, and Plutarch. Rousseau agreed with Kant’s argument that animals are not rational, but added that they still deserve rights and protection from harm based on the fact that they are sentient beings, similar to the arguments of Pythagoras, and Plutarch (DeMello, 2012, p. 381). As DeMello (2012) writes, Rousseau felt that “regardless of intellectual capacity, animals should have the negative right to not be harmed” (p. 382). The previous philosophical values are quaintly summarized in the famous statement by Jeremy Bentham in 1780, which says “the question is not, Can they reason? Nor Can they talk? But, Can they suffer” (DeMello, 2012, p. 382; Singer, 2009, p. 203). Bentham longed for the day when the rest of the animals in our world would be able to obtain the same rights that we as humans have, “which never could have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny” (Singer, 2009, p. 203-204). Here, Bentham shows how our corrupt society’s beliefs that only the rights of humans matter is detrimental to how we view and treat animals. Bentham’s arguments for animals form the basis for the animal rights movement, and are carried on today by revolutionary theorists like Peter Singer and David Nibert.

As discussed above, there is heavy discussion of rationality versus sentience among philosophers, with regard to how humans should treat animals. Rather than rationality, we feel that sentience is the main factor that should be considered when looking at human-

animal relations. The previous arguments from the likes of Pythagoras, Plutarch, Rousseau, and Bentham support my argument that while animals are not able to speak like humans, they are still sentient beings. The absence of the ability to speak does not mean the absence of being able to feel pain and suffering. In killing and abusing them, we are depriving them of the life that they deserve. Every being deserves life, regardless of if they have the ability to speak or not. Furthermore, even though we cannot understand what the animals are saying, they are still yearning for the abuse to end. Animals are sentient beings that do not deserve to be harmed for human pleasure. As Bekoff (2010) writes, “all animals, all beings deserve respectful consideration simply for the fact that they exist” (p. 23) As we have shown, the views on human-animal relations date back to the days of Aristotle, leading all the way to the theories of speciesism and human exceptionalism that apply today, allowing for the abuse of animals by humans, simply because some humans see themselves as better than animals.

### **Connections between Christianity and Perpetuating Animal Abuse**

While there were a multitude of philosophers that believed in equality between humans and animals, Judeo-Christianity based religions borrowed mostly from Aristotle’s thoughts. The role of Christianity also plays an important role in perpetuating the separation of humans and animals in society, with humans in power. These values are clearly stated when the *Book of Genesis* says, “and God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (DeMello, 2012, p. 379). This passage states clearly that man has the power since man was made by God, and everything else on earth, including animals, was made to serve man. The domination of man over animals is even more cemented into the brain of society in the story

of Noah in the *Book of Genesis*. Genesis states, “the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth” (Singer, 2002, p. 187 & Rasmussen, 2011, p. 103).

St. Augustine's beliefs also go along with the message in the *Book of Genesis*, further suppressing animals. In the fourth and fifth centuries, St. Augustine's work argued that humans are of great value since they are linked to God, while animals and the rest of the earth are not (DeMello, 2012, p. 379). DeMello (2012) discusses this further in the term, the great chain of being. Stemming off of principles from Aristotle, there is a certain hierarchy established in society, called the great chain of being. It starts with God, then men, and then animals (p. 379). This hierarchical mentality reinforces the belief that animals are below us.

### **Theories That Explain How We View Human/Animal Relations Today**

The flow of logic that resulted in society's belief that animals are below humans starts with the different philosophers, then leads to religion, and ends with the theories that we live and practice today. In her work, Margo DeMello (2012) cites the belief known as human exceptionalism, which states that “humans are in some way unique in the animal world” as the cause of the human-animal divide in society today (p. 33). As DeMello writes, humans and animals are really not much different from each other. In his work, Marc Bekoff discusses a theory similar to that of DeMello's human exceptionalism called speciesism. Bekoff (2010) defines speciesism as the “discrimination against or exploitation of certain animal species by human beings, based on an assumption of mankind's superiority” (p. 26). Similar to DeMello's human exceptionalism, Bekoff (2010) argues that speciesism is what causes humans to see themselves as different, and better, than other parts of nature, inadvertently leading to the mistreatment of animals (p. 25-26). The ideas of human

exceptionalism and speciesism, grouped with philosophical and religious thought, all come together to explain how animals are viewed in society.

When looking at it from a biological perspective, humans and animals are in fact very similar. Specifically, both humans and animals are, “multicellular, eukaryotic creatures... [we] move independently, sexually reproduce, and must eat other organisms to survive” (DeMello, 2012, p. 32). It is basic biological knowledge that humans are animals, so why the divide? As shown here, humans and animals have a lot in common. With that being said, we also have some differences. Even though there are obvious differences, this does not mean that the abuse and exploitation towards animals is acceptable. DeMello (2012) argues that we do not use that biological system of categorization in our daily lives; instead social constructs create the divide between humans and animals (p. 32-33). Similarly, Bekoff (2010) makes many interesting points when looking at the contradicting viewpoints in the “us versus them” mentality of how we as humans view animals. For the most part, we admire animals, whether it be in having them as pets or viewing them in zoos. On the other hand, humans are still quick to push them away, point out differences, and establish the barrier between humans and nonhumans. As discussed by both DeMello (2012) and Bekoff (2010), this separation is almost idiotic, since we are so similar to animals.

The social construct is shown in the idea of human exceptionalism and speciesism. While biology proves that humans are one in the same with animals, society’s beliefs in human exceptionalism and speciesism overrule all principles of biology. This results in placing humans above animals in society. Once we view humans as having more power and value than animals, the abuse begins. As Bekoff (2010) writes, hierarchical views led to a,

“deadly descent into the dark abyss of arrogance where cruelty is nurtured in the corners of certitude” (p. 26).

The claim of human exceptionalism and speciesism as social constructs is supported even more when you analyze the relationship between humans and animals in other societies, and look at social practices throughout Western cultures. As DeMello (2012) writes, the human-animal divide is, “culturally and historically contingent... depending on time and place” (p.33). DeMello uses non-Western cultures as an example of the different cultures and history. She discusses how in non-Western societies there is not such a sharp distinction between humans and animals. Instead, many cultures saw animals as ancestors or clan members (DeMello, 2012, p. 34). These beliefs are a part of the term animism, which is a view that humans, plants, animals, and inanimate objects are all endowed with spirit (DeMello, 2012, p. 34). Similarly, the Hindu belief in pantheism, which states that, “the natural and human worlds are one and the same” also places a higher value on animals than our society (DeMello, 2012, p. 35-36).

The social practices in Europe are a sharp contrast to non-Western cultures. Unlike in non-Western cultures, the separation of humans and animals was “strengthened through social practice and philosophical thought” (DeMello, 2012, p. 38). DeMello provides many interesting details about European culture that reinforce the already existing human-animal separation. For instance, how upper class English families did not let their babies crawl because it was viewed as being animal-like, or people’s fear of werewolves, paired with obsessions with half human half animal monsters (DeMello, 2012, p. 38-39). Similar to DeMello, Bekoff (2010) also touches on instances where societal values perpetuate negative views towards animals, with the use of the common phrase, “acting like an animal.” Upon

first glance, this seems like a common term that is used in our everyday lives, but once you analyze it more, the more you see the abuse it calls for. The use of the phrase describes bad actions, whether they be, “competitive, angry, or violent” (Bekoff, 2010, p. 105). As a result of this, we associate those negative ideas with animals, further separating them from humans.

David A. Nibert adds to the conversation of the various societal values that drove a wedge between humans and animals, ending badly for animals, in his discussion of the domestication of animals. Nibert (2013) defines domestication as when animals are integrated into our economy as objects for humans to use, own, and profit from (p. 11). Nibert cites the domestication of animals as the main idea that perpetuates and encourages violence towards animals, changing the word from domestication to *domesecration*. Nibert (2013) defines this new term as, “the systematic practice of violence in which social animals are enslaved and biologically manipulated, resulting in their objectification, subordination, and oppression” (p. 12). Through this system of domeseccration, the role of animals changed from sentient beings to property to be exploited in the marketplace by human owners. Research done by archeologists has presented just how damaging domeseccration was to the animals, at the time that domestication began. Looking at the bones of the animal remains showed signs of, “physical trauma, poor diet, chronic arthritis, gum disease, and high levels of stress” (Nibert, 2013, p. 11). This evidence points directly to the suffering that animals faced under domestication, solely for human use and profit. Domeseccration furthers the hierarchical ideas presented earlier, that animals are objects at the bottom of the system, made to serve the humans at the top.

The separation of humans from animals is an imperative aspect that leads to animal abuse. Bekoff (2010) provides an intriguing example of this when he discusses the significance of giving animals a name. Specifically, Bekoff (2010) writes how “naming animals immediately creates an identity and a connection,” and how “a name indicates that we are meeting an individual being with feelings and an autobiography” (p. 109). In research labs that involve animals, the researchers do just the opposite with the animals they study, and now it makes sense why. In giving the lab animals numbers instead of names, it furthers their place in society as property to be used for human gain, instead of a living being that has a name, feeling, and a story. Performing research on a dog named, “Spot,” versus a dog named, “#4425” has two very different meanings. Experimenting on “#4425” will be considered much less cruel and harmful, rather than experimenting on “Spot.” As Bekoff writes, giving the animals numbers helps to alienate the researcher from the animal, disconnecting them emotionally, which justifies whatever abuse that might occur during the experiment. The further we place humans from animals, the more abuse will occur. The emotional connection that prevents abuse is present more for something you have an connection with, rather than a nameless machine.

Bekoff (2010) states that, “connection breeds caring, alienation breeds disrespect” (p. 9). This statement perfectly relates to how the earlier examples of social practices are detrimental to the lives of animals. Societal values and norms did not facilitate any sense of connection between humans and animals. Instead, society taught us to alienate animals, placing them at a lower status than humans, indefinitely leading to their abuse. Our society’s views on animals are not universal, but constructed by how our individual culture and society runs. Our culture and society was conducive to the abuse and exploitation of animals. The

popular idea of “divide and conquer” strongly supports the Bekoff quote presented earlier, and the other theorists. The dividing is done by the structures in our society, specifically the capitalist principles that run society. The division is done to separate humans and animals, in order to perpetuate abuse in the name of production and profit. Furthermore, the dividing is done so that we continue to depend on the principles of capitalism to run our daily lives. Once society is divided, we have that “us versus them” mentality, further allowing for the hierarchical principles of capitalism. We abuse the “them” of society for our own gain, and if we do not abuse the “them” of society, we make no profit, and the system fails. As long as society is divided, capitalism and exploitation will prevail. If the “us” and “them” came together, we would be able to see the flaws in capitalism. The abuse that occurs for human gain, on the backs of animals, will come to light once society is no longer divided.

The ideas that human life is worth more than animal life began during the times of the ancient Greek philosophers, and has carried into how society is run today. The arguments of philosophers, various religious messages, and theories, all come together to form how we view animals, and in turn treat them. Namely, all of those factors allow for the abuse of animals. While all these different viewpoints come together in society, animals fall deeper and deeper into the trenches of oppression. We are socialized to see animals as beneath us, so why would we do anything else but abuse them? Since the times of Aristotle, we have been taught that abuse to animals is a normal part of human life. These various beliefs and ideals took place before capitalism even existed, and helped to further the oppression that animals face under capitalism.

### Flaws Within Our Prevailing Capitalist System

*“The property of those higher on the hierarchy is more valuable than the lives of those below. It is acceptable for those above to increase the amount of property they control - in everyday language, to make money - by destroying or taking the lives of those below. This is called production.”*

- *Making a Killing: The Political Economy of Animal Rights* by Bob Torres

The values and ideals mentioned above with regard to how we treat animals predate the establishment of capitalism. Even though this is the case, those beliefs form the foundation for the further abuse that animals faced once our society underwent into a capitalist economy. Capitalism is characterized as “the private ownership of property and the consensual exchange of goods and services in a free market” (Bishop, 2000, p. 4). In this system, everyone is able to join the system, sell our labor, and be paid for our work and contributions to the economy. While today’s society is capitalist-run, a lot of critiques exist that fight against the system. In his book that established a manifesto for animal rights in society, Bekoff (2010) cites a quote by theologian Thomas Berry, which says that, “our relationship with Nature should be one of awe, not one of use” (p. 23). This admiration of nature, instead of using it for all its profit and resources, is the basis for critiques of capitalism.

The facets of capitalism allow for the continued oppression of animals today, and the many critiques of capitalism bolster this argument. The literary work of the fathers of the radical critiques of capitalism, German philosophers Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, marks the beginning of many sources written critiquing capitalism. According to Marx and Engels (1848), the problems within capitalism begin with the constant class struggles between the “oppressor and oppressed” (p. 14). Marx and Engels cite these class discrepancies all the way

back to the times of the ancient Romans. Specifically, they write how throughout history, we are always able to find hierarchical societies, establishing who is the oppressor, and who is the oppressed. They go on to describe examples that have occurred, from the knights and slaves in Ancient Rome to the lords and serfs of the Middle Ages (p. 14). Marx and Engels state how the class separation that began with the Ancient Romans has continued into modern society when they say how society today has “sprouted from the ruins of feudal society [and] has not done away with class antagonisms,” instead we have “established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones” (p. 14). Marx and Engels’ argue that the negative values and principles from capitalism have existed all throughout time, and have just been tweaked to relate to the present. While in the past the separation existed between the lords and the serfs, now it exists between those with the capital and those without. Those without the capital can be either humans or animals.

Marx and Engels’ previous arguments about capitalism discuss the influence that large scale economic systems have on everyday life in society. Charles Derber and Yale R. Magrass (2016) further these arguments with their idea of “structural bullying,” which states that the institutions of our society, like the big corporations that play an active role in our economy, are predicated upon a bullying mentality, which perpetuates abuse and domination (p. 7). Furthermore, Derber and Magrass (2016) make the case that we are blinded by just how much influence these flawed institutions have on our everyday lives. They write how “we live in a culture that ‘psychologizes’ almost all social problems. We think of behavior and behavioral problems as being driven by individual rather than institutional or structural causes” (p. 8). We connect the everyday problems that occur in society to the individuals that commit the acts, as opposed to thinking about the institutions that perpetuate abuse and

violence in society. This concept of structural bullying helps to explicate the original argument of Marx and Engels, in how the economic institution of capitalism is the reason for the oppression that occurs in society today, to both humans and animals in the workforce. In order to fully understand the critiques of capitalism, we must shift our entire way of thinking. In particular, we have to stop separating personal problems from societal problems, and see just how much influence our economic structures have on how we think, feel, and act towards others.

### **Defining the Important Terms Relating to Capitalism**

Before going into detail on the critiques of capitalism, we must define the various terms that make up capitalist ideals; the bourgeois class, the proletariat class, private property, commodification, production, and self-alienation. In their work, Marx and Engels (1848) use the terms bourgeois and proletariat to describe the ruling and working class. The bourgeois is the class that runs all the economy, along with owning the property and capital. As Marx and Engels (1848) write, “the bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage labourers” (p. 16). This quote displays how the bourgeois control and maintain all aspects of society, so that jobs that people are performing do not matter. It only matters that they are making money for the system. In contrast to the bourgeois is the proletariat, the working class whose lives revolve around serving the bourgeois. These are the doctors, lawyers, and artists as discussed earlier by Marx and Engels, whose work and worth goes right to the bourgeois. Instead of working to find happiness and success, the proletariat are slaves to the capitalist machine.

Marx and Engels (1848) make an intriguing comparison of the relationship between the bourgeois and proletariat to that of officers and soldiers in the military. Specifically, they describe the relationship as

masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overlooker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. (p. 18)

The earlier comparison made by Marx and Engels perfectly describes the poisonous relationship between the bourgeois and the proletariat. Members of the proletariat class do not live to be happy. Instead, they live to work and continue to mass produce. While the proletariat class is devoting their lives to working, the bourgeois is extracting all the profit made by the proletariat, and taking it from themselves. Furthermore, it is much more than just being enslaved by the boss that you work for. You are also a slave to the society that is so supported by capitalism and perpetuates the unequal balance of power between the haves and the have not's. Capitalism establishes a cyclic relationship with the bourgeois at the top and the proletariat at the bottom, with no room for change or mobility.

Behind every worker in capitalist society is the goods that the workers produce. Since our lives are so intertwined and influenced by capitalist ideals, we sometimes forget the actual process that happens before we ever actually receive whatever goods it is that we purchase. In particular, we do not realize the abuse and exploitation that is involved in giving us our iPhone from the Apple Store, or our pure-bred poodle from an online breeder (Torres,

2002, p. 19). Marx and Engels (1848) address the topic of the constant production and reproduction that capitalist societies depend on when they write, “the bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society” (Marx and Engels. 1848, p. 16) Similarly, Derber and Magrass (2016) write how, “capitalism cannot be a static or stationary, no-growth system... the competitive structure requires that capitalist dominate and destroy their rivals by expanding production more cheaply, rapidly, and efficiently” (p. 77). The ideas presented by Marx, Engels, Derber, and Magrass show how in order for capitalism to flourish, mass production must happen at a rapid pace. Any stagnation will cause the system to fail, and the powerful bourgeoisie will end up with nothing. To prevent this from happening, those with the capital may go to many violent extremes to ensure production continues, with no remorse for the damage that ensues along the way. Workers and society are negatively affected by the constant production and reproduction. We seem to get lost in the long process of production and reproduction that capitalism demands, and we fail to think of the negative effects that come with the need for constant production. Workers are suffering, while everyday people are benefitting from whatever product they purchase.

In order to produce the necessary amount of goods to survive in a capitalist economy, we must commodify the means of production, so that they can produce the most amount of product, in the fastest and cheapest way. Marx (1867) defines a commodity as, “a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another” (27). Furthermore, Marx (1867) argues that it does not matter how or why the certain commodity makes consumers happy, it just does (p. 27).

Since workers in capitalist societies are so focused on their work, production, and commodification, they begin to lose all sense of self and purpose. Specifically, Marx and Engels (1848) write how workers in capitalism, “live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital (p. 18). This quote states how we work not because we enjoy what we are doing, but because we need to make a profit. Workers find no value in the objects they are mass producing, so they in turn lose value in themselves (Petrovich, 1963). These ideas all make up Marx and Engels’ concept of self-alienation. Laurence Thomas (1979) further discusses the concept of self-alienation when he writes how “for instead of finding self-fulfillment in his work, the laborer sees it as only a means to his existence... he views his labor not as the free exercise of his talents and energies, but as a requirement; his work is not voluntary, but imposed” (p. 67). Again, this sheds light on the idea of how in a capitalist society, people’s lives revolve solely around their work. Since there is so much emphasis on profit and production for those in the proletariat class, they are not able to focus on much else in life. Someone could enjoy being a painter, like in Thomas’ example of a person exercising their talents, but instead will have to work in a job tirelessly every day that they hate, because society is required to make money for the capitalist system to keep it running.

The self-alienation that workers face also has negative implications for how we empathize with others in society. As Marx and Engels (1848) write, “the bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation” (p. 16). People have lost all empathy and are only focused on work. People have lost not only empathy towards their family lives, but also to the animals that they are harming in the name of profit and production. The capitalist principles of the bourgeoisie and

proletariat, private property, production, commodification, and self-alienation all pose serious threats to not only human workers, but animal workers too. These capitalist values further perpetuate animal abuse today.

Diving Deeper into the Trenches of Abuse: Looking at the Interlaced Relationship Between  
Capitalism and the Abuse in Puppy Mill Breeding and Dog Fighting

“Animals aren’t workers that are free to return home at the end of the working day; instead, they are owned outright, the property of another, disposable and fungible just like any piece of inanimate property.”

*-Making a Killing: The Political Economy of Animal Rights* by Bob Torres page 19

The previous discussion has set the stage for the main argument of this work: the societal values established long ago allow for the abuse of animals in society, and the principles of capitalism further the normalization of animal abuse in society. This abuse occurs in many facets, from chickens on farms, to elephants in the circus, or the dogs in Michael Vick’s dogfighting ring. While we recognize that this abuse is happening everywhere, the main scope of our argument is on industries that involve dogs. The puppy mill breeding business and the dog fighting business are both particular dog industries that cause a lot of violence towards the dogs in their paths, all in the name of capitalism.

Before thoroughly delving into just how dogs are affected by capitalism, and the other corrupt ideas that are born from capitalism, we must establish information about what each business entails. The fundamental setup of the puppy mill breeding business and the dogfighting business provides the base for the further abuse to dogs to occur.

### **Background Information on the Puppy Mill Breeding Business**

According to information from the Animal Legal and Historical Center at Michigan State University (2017), a puppy mill is described as a commercial breeding operation whose main goal is to maximize profit, at the expense of the dogs they are breeding and selling (Barnes, 2017). It is at these commercial breeding sites that dogs are bred to be in tip top shape and condition for their owners, also known as being described as pure-bred. John Rossi

(2017) defines pure-breeding as, “the practice of selectively breeding animals so as to produce, and then maintain distinct species sub-types, commonly known as breeds” (p. 111). If a certain dog has a trait that is desirable to society, whether it be based on appearance, behavior, or ancestry, it will be purebred to preserve these desired characteristics (Rossi, 2017, p. 111). In his work, Rossi (2017) argues that humans created purebred dogs for use on entertainment and work, whether it be for hunting and herding, or aesthetics and fighting (p. 112). As discussed in the Michael Vick example, the people involved in the brutal dogfighting business made sure to only work with the most strong, tough, and aggressive dogs, in order to win and gain the most profit.

While puppy mill dogs usually come from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) licensed breeders, that license does not ensure that the breeder is in charge of the health of the dogs it breeds. Because of this, puppy mill breeders are allowed to get away with a lot of the harm they provide towards their dogs. The dogs from puppy mills are typically sold either on the internet or to pet stores. So instead of being given to a responsible owner, they are sold off to whoever wants them, as long as they make a profit (Barnes, 2017). Once these puppies are sold, they face even more turmoil throughout the rest of their lives. According to the article from the Animal Legal and Historical Center at Michigan State University, puppies from puppy mills have deep behavioral and health problems, that stem from their lives at the puppy mills. Specifically, their behavioral problems come from the stress of being taken away from their mother’s too early, the transportation to the pet store, and adjusting to the new environment in the pet store. Furthermore, the health problems that the puppies face come from the fact that before they are sold to the pet stores or over the internet, they face horribly inhumane conditions. Licensed breeders subject the puppies they

are breeding to the bare minimum survival standards that are required by the law, resulting in living the beginning of their young lives in chicken wire cages, stacked up by the dozen, with no more than six inches of space to move (Barnes, 2017). As shown above, there are little laws that bind the men and women that run the various puppy mill breeding sites around the country to provide the dogs with humane living conditions. Rather than thinking of the well-being of the dogs, they instead care about extracting the dogs for all their worth, depriving them from any type of normal life, all for profit to keep up with the always moving capitalist economy.

### **Behind the Ever-Expanding Dogfighting Business**

Like the puppy mill breeding business, a lot of harm and exploitation also occurs in the dog fighting business. In American culture, we love to watch animals. Even though many of us have domestic pets at home, we still enjoy watching animals that we do not have access to. This is shown in the popularity of zoos, aquariums, circuses, snorkeling, or even just watching Animal Planet (DeMello, 2012, p. 99). As DeMello (2012) writes, “in our post-industrial world, companion animals remain the only form of physical connection that Americans have with animals” (p. 99-100). Even though this great interest exists, it is still not enough to explain the abuse that occurs in the observing of animals. One instance in which animals face grave abuse, in the name of viewing and entertainment, is dogfighting.

Research estimates that around 250,00 dogs each year are victims to dogfighting. It is also estimated that around 40,000 people across the United States either own dogs that fight, or breed dogs to fight. In 2009, shortly after Michael Vick’s infamous arrest for dogfighting, the largest dogfighting raid in the history of the U.S occurred, between 20 different location in eight different states. This further emphasized the growing issue of dogfighting in the U.S,

and pushed activists to do more to handle the issue. During the raid, around 400 dogs were obtained, and around 27 arrests were made (DeMello, 2012, p. 118; Perdue & Lockwood, 2014, p. 12).

These statistics show just how popular this deadly business is. During a dogfighting match, two vicious dogs are pitted against each other in an arena and forced to fight until one is either too injured to continue with the fight, or until death. While there are supposed to be rules that dictate how long a fight should occur, most of them end up lasting hours, until one dog eventually dies an agonizing death. Quite a profitable business, those who attend the dogfights place bets that are as large as \$50,000 a person. The profitable business also spends millions of dollars on the selling, breeding, training, fighting, and betting on the dogs. Furthermore, the most valuable dogs are sometimes worth thousands of dollars. The success of this profitable business comes at the cost of the well-being of the dogs in the fights. The dogs suffer from injuries like ripped ears, broken jaws, crushed sinuses, ripped mouths and noses, and much more. These awful injuries result in infection, massive blood loss, exhaustion, and death. Along with the injuries that ensue from the fighting itself, the dogs' lives are also in the hands of their cruel owners. Even if a dog survives the damage from fighting, the owner can ruthlessly kill a dog, solely because it lost the fight (DeMello, 2012, p. 118).

### **The Innocent Dogs as the Proletariat, and Their Abusive Owners as the Bourgeoisie**

The descriptions above of how the business of pure-breeding dogs in puppy mills and dogfighting operate is full of capitalist-influenced ideas and motives. In particular, the hierarchical structure of our society is set up today plays a major role in the abuse that dogs face in our society. Specifically, the power inequalities that result from the hierarchical

nature of capitalism are explicitly shown in the violent businesses of dogfighting and puppy mill breeders. When looking specifically at the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, it is shown that it is one capitalist principle that bolsters the societal acceptance for the abuse that animals face every day.

As previously discussed, capitalism has many detrimental effects on interpersonal relationships in society. The relationship between the “haves”, also known as the bourgeois, and the “have not’s”, also known as the proletariat, in capitalism establishes a sense of hierarchy that leads to a lot of domination in society. Furthermore, capitalism normalizes hierarchy and exploitation within society. In their work, authors Charles Derber and Yale R. Magrass take these arguments that were originally made by Marx and Engels, and further apply them to animals. Derber and Magrass (2016) assert that the hierarchical way in which our system is set up today allows for the domination of not only human workers, but also animals. As Derber and Magrass (2016) write, “people who bully animals have more power than their pets or other targets, and the agricultural companies that bully animals have enormously more power than the animals they raise and slaughter” (p. 60). These “power inequalities” that Derber and Magrass write about argue that since society allows for humans to have more power than animals, animals are the ones who face the most bullying (p. 60).

The success that Michael Vick has today, in spite of the publicly known abuse that he inflicted on dogs in his dog fighting business, is a good example of how the exploitative nature of the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in capitalist systems allows for continued abuse towards animals. Vick is a perfect example of how those at the top will continue to come out above all those under them that they abuse. It is known by the world that Vick did awful things to dogs, yet he is now still making millions and being

watched by the world on TV. Meanwhile, the dogfighting business is still flourishing, and more and more dogs are being used, abused, and dying. Vick committed an awful crime, and will continue to make millions with no remorse for all the innocent animals he harmed for his own pleasure. Vick's success is a blatant example of all that is wrong with the hierarchical nature of capitalism.

Vick's example is one of many, where the bourgeoisie continues to advance in society and accumulate more and more capital, while the proletariat continues to suffer from abuse at the hands of the bourgeoisie. We allow for and perpetuate violence towards animals when we support or even associate with people and companies that condone it. The fact that Vick can still be a successful individual in society shows just how much we value the bourgeoisie more the proletariat. Furthermore, it shows just how human life and money is valued more than the lives of innocent animals. It is not until we shame and banish people, like Michael Vick, that the problem of dog fighting will start to be fixed.

Some may be hesitant to believe that watching Michael Vick on Fox sports has anything to do with the abuse that occurs in dogfighting. In fact, it has a lot to do with perpetuating the abuse. As Torres (2007) writes, "though few of us have any *direct* hand in the exploitation of animals, we nonetheless allow exploitation to take place for us, as we continue to demand and purchase the products of animal suffering and exploitation" (p. 69). By watching and supporting Michael Vick on television, he is gaining more fame, success, and money, while he should be punished for his awful wrongdoings. This allows for the continuance of abuse towards animals, since it sends the message that you can be convicted of the crime of animal abuse, and still be welcomed into society.

Author Simon Harding furthers the connection between dogfighting and the relationship between the bourgeois and proletariat in capitalism in his research on why exactly people become involved in dogfighting. Harding (2012) cites a 2008 study from the University of Chicago which interviewed 165 dog fighters and asked them what the appeal to dogfighting was. The results showed that the appeal to dog fighting comes from a desire to appear tough, earn money, and satisfy the interest in competition (p. 156). The desire to appear tough to your competition directly reflects the negative relationship between the bourgeois and proletariat. In order to maintain the status of being seen as “above” whoever is below you, whether it be the dogs your are abusing or your competition, the bourgeois resort to violence in the dogfighting business. In order to keep the business flourishing and the capitalist machine running, violence must occur. The constant tension and competition between the two classes benefits only those on top, while the innocent dogs suffer.

The damaging effects that the relationship between the bourgeoisie and proletariat in capitalism is present in not only dog fighting, but also puppy mill breeding. This is especially shown in how the law allows for the abuse that the dogs involved in puppy mills face. Torres (2007) substantiates this argument when he argues that in our capitalist society, we are allowed to do essentially anything with our property, whether it is an animal or an iPod, as long as it is within the law (p. 59-60). Torres’ argument is furthered by the information previously stated from the Animal Legal and Historical Center at Michigan State University, which discusses how breeders subject their dogs in the puppy mills to the bare minimum standards that are provided by the law. In this, the law is essentially allowing for the inhumane treatment that the dogs face while in captivity by their breeders. This abuse is

shown in the small cages that the dogs live in, being forced away from their mothers, or receiving little to no medical attention.

Similar to the Michael Vick situation, the laws that are meant to protect animals from harm and abuse, are really just allowing the harm and abuse to occur even more. The men and women who run the puppy mills, or the bourgeois, are supported by the laws that are created and reinforced by society. With this, the abuse and exploitation that dogs, or the proletariat, face in the puppy mill business is further normalized by the laws in society. This normalization is shown in how it is within the law for the owners of puppy mills to subject their dogs to barely livable living conditions. It is not until the public recognizes the abuse that is happening right under our noses, within the laws, that the dogs will have any sort of protection.

### **The Violence That Occurs from Viewing Dogs as Property**

The view of dogs as property, rather than living beings with the ability to feel pain and sadness, is furthered by the view that they are not sentient beings, therefore their feelings do not matter. Logic like this is seen in Descartes' argument years ago, and is still present today. This claim is immediately debunked by research done by Gregory Berns, professor of neuroeconomics at Emory University. Berns performed a study on how dogs feel emotions through performing MRI's, relating back to the emotional capabilities of animals. His main conclusion was that dogs have similar emotions to humans, so we should rethink how we view them as property.

Specifically, Berns (2013) found that dogs and humans are similar in the function of the caudate nucleus in the brain (p. 2). Berns (2013) writes that in humans, the caudate, "plays a key role in the anticipation of things we enjoy, like food, love, and money" (p. 3).

Parts of the caudate activate during an MRI to many things that humans enjoy (Berns, 2013, p. 3). With regard to dogs, activity in the caudate increased in response to hand signals from humans that indicated food was coming, and in response to smells of familiar people (Berns, 2013, p. 3). To relate the brain actions in humans and dogs, Berns (2013) discusses the term, “functional homology”, which states that, “many of the same things that activate the human caudate, which are associated with positive emotions, also activate the dog caudate” (p. 3). In conclusion, Berns argues that since dogs are able to experience positive emotions, like love and attachment, they have a level of sentience that is comparable to that of a child. With that information given, society should rethink its treatment of dogs. Berns’ research relates back to the claim that animals are sentient beings that feel positive and negative emotions, therefore we should not subject them to the pain and suffering that comes with being seen as property in capitalism.

The view of the animals as property, rather than living, breathing, sentient beings, is another major aspect of capitalism that allows for the abuse of dogs in the business. The blatant view of the dogs in puppy mills as property is shown in the article from the Animal Legal and Historical Center (2017) at Michigan State University, which states that, “breeders that are willing to subject puppies to that risk may be less likely to view the puppies as anything more than a crop or commodity, and as such may not have provided a proper breeding environment” (Barnes, 2017). As shown in the previous example, the breeders see the dogs as none other than a piece of property to be used and abused, which allows for the acceptable violence to occur. This quote shows how abuse immediately follows, once the dogs in the puppy mills are described as property, instead of a living being.

The dogs involved in the brutal dogfighting business are also equated to property. An example of this is shown in Harding's discussion of how owners show off all of the horrendous injuries that their dogs have, in order to show how successful they are in fight. Specifically, Harding (2012) writes how, "scarred dogs are often paraded by owners or prospective fighters as a signifies that the dog has been through many battles and survived" (p. 172). The horrendous scars and injuries that the owners are showing off consist of torn flesh, broken jaws, severed arteries, gouged eyes, severed limbs, and much more (Harding, 2012, p. 172 & DeMello, 2012, p. 118). This example provides a gruesome glimpse into how dogfighters operate, and view the damage to a living animal as a trophy to model their success. As shown, they view their dogs as a piece of property that has many accomplishments, rather than an actual animal.

Torres (2007) furthers the discussion of the damaging effects that the view of dogs as property has on the well-being of dogs when he writes how "your dog is like your iPod or your car or any other material effect you own" (p. 59). Once we have this mentality that equates dogs, which are living beings, with non-living entities, like a phone, there are no limits to how we will go about treating the dogs. We do not feel empathy for our phone, which is a piece of property, when it falls on the floor. Similarly, once dogs are viewed as property, there is no remorse or consideration for their feelings and safety when they are subjected to abuse for profit, like in the business of puppy mills or dogfighting. Since the dogs that are in these business are seen as property whose sole purpose is to make money, the business owners have no hesitation in subjecting them to living the beginning of their lives in miniature cages, or forcing them to fight until death in dog fighting matches.

Gary Francione is the biggest proponent for the argument that the reason why animals are treated so badly, is because we view them as property instead of sentient beings. Along with Torres, Francione adds to this conversation in his comparison of someone damaging a clock, and someone damaging an animal. Specifically, Francione (2000) argues how if someone were to damage a clock with a hammer or a dog with a hammer, the owner's reaction would be the same (p. 2). The owner would react negatively, because his/her property is damaged. Furthermore, Francione says, "the dog, like the clock... is nothing more than a machine and possess no interests in the first place" (p. 2). The owner feels affected by the damage to its property, the dog, when really the dog is the one that is actually damaged. The owner does care about the feelings of the dog, he/she simply cares about the fact that property was damaged. Since the dog is seen as property, it is not entitled to its own feelings. The comparison of animals to machines in this example echoes the views of Descartes, who also saw animals as mere machines to be used by humans. This comparison helps to expand the capitalist concept of property to not only inanimate objects, but also to living and feeling animals.

The damaging relationship shown in Francione's example of the clock versus the dog can also be seen in both the puppy mill breeding business and in dog fighting. As mentioned earlier, the dogs that are products of puppy mill breeders suffer from the ramifications for the rest of their lives. The inhumane living conditions and treatment that the dogs face so early in their lives eventually ends up in either illness or even death. Similarly, the physical and mental characteristics that come from the abuse that dogs face in the dogfighting business persist throughout their whole lives. This abuse ranges from the "pancake dogs" who have no

trust in humans, or the dogs that must live the rest of their lives with no teeth, so that they would be sure to submit to rape.

The explicit abuse of the poor dogs in the puppy mills and dogfighting is similar to the damage to the clock and dog in Francione's example. When this awful incident happens to the dog the breeder is also upset. The breeder is upset not because the dog's awful living conditions eventually led to a grueling death in a small chicken wire cage or on the floor of the dogfighting ring. Instead, the breeder is upset that they have lost a dog that was in the process of being commodified for a potential buyer or bidder. The individual feelings of the dog are not at all taken into consideration, the breeder is just upset that they are not making a profit. This is analogous to the reaction that Francione discusses in his example. In both instances, the feelings of the owner of the property are valued more than the actual living being that is being harmed. This example brings home the argument that Torres and Francione make, stating that since dogs are seen as property, they are thrown into the exploitative capitalist system and squeezed of all life and autonomy.

The view of dogs as property not only allows for them to be thrown into the production line, but it also normalizes the belief that they can be disposed of however their owner feels necessary. For example, if someone does not like their dog, they easily just take it to a shelter or have it euthanized because they see it as a piece of property. The heartless disposal of animals is also discussed by Torres. Specifically, Torres (2007) writes how when we get tired of our pet, we can easily sell it for whatever price we deem fit or take it to the vet to be euthanized (p. 58). This reiterates the idea that when we no longer want a pet anymore, we dispose of it so easily and carelessly, since we see it as a mere piece of property. If I did not want my car anymore, I would put an ad on Craigslist, and it could be

sold the next day. Should this same routine go for dogs? Do we just give away this living and breathing being to the next highest bidder?

Torres' argument really stresses the point that since our pets are considered our property, we can treat them however we want and dispose of them however we want, without any say from the animal. Torres (2007) mentions the severity of this way of thinking when he writes, "we are so accustomed to thinking of animals as our property that we rarely think of the impacts of this legal and social status for animals" (p. 58). This mentality has had repercussions for the millions of unwanted dogs that reside in shelters today. This view of dogs as just another piece of property in our capitalist economic system furthers the abuse and mistreatment they face every day. Until we see them as living beings rather than property, this abuse will continue. It is imperative that all animals be treated as the living beings that they are, rather than like iPhones or cars that we can use, abuse, and dispose of whenever we please.

### **Mass Production, Commodification, and Brutality in Dog Industries**

Once dogs are seen as property, they are immediately thrown into the mass production route, commodified to be at their highest value, and sold for as much profit as possible. In this harsh process, success and profit is valued much more than the well-being of the dog. This mentality held by those in the puppy mill breeding business is shown in the quote from the Animal Legal and Historical Center at Michigan State University which states how,

the dogs are often reduced to chattels with profiteers spending as little as possible on their "commodities" in order to maximize earnings. This cold economic calculus—

produce more for less—leads to a situation where puppies are treated as widgets, and puppy mills serve as factories for mass-production (Barnes, 2017).

This quote suggests the abuse that dogs in the puppy mill business suffer from, all in the name of profit and mass production. In viewing dogs as property, we further the success of the highly profiting, and highly abusive, businesses, like the puppy mill industry. The more society wants the perfect purebred puppies, the more these destructive businesses will produce them. These profitable puppy mills exist solely because of the people placing great value on having a purebred dog, rather than a mutt from a rescue organization. There are innumerable rescue organization in the U.S. that home the copious amount of homeless dogs in our nation, yet people still go out and buy from puppy mill breeders, leaving the unwanted dogs in shelters. Relating back to the view of dogs as property, we want a piece of property that has best value, so it makes sense to look past the dogs in shelters, who are known for being unwanted, problematic, or mutts. Our society is programmed to have the values that if we want the “best dog,” we must go to the puppy mill breeders who breed the pure bred animals. As long as people have the mentality of having the pure-bred piece of property with the highest value, the exploitative puppy mill breeding businesses will continue to mass produce the dogs in demand. This continuation in production subjects the dogs that are already at the puppy mills to even more abuse. Additionally, it continues the plethora of homeless dogs in shelters to stay there, with no way out.

Not only do puppy mills serve as factories for mass production, but the dog fighting business does as well. All of the aspects that go into the intricate business of dogfighting allow for it to be a bloody and exploitative factory where much abuse occurs, all for profit. As Harding writes, in a three week period, the dogs will fight up to 10 times a week. Whether

the dog is sick, tired, injured, or starving, they still have to fight. This example as shown in dog fighting relates back to the capitalist principle of mass production. There is so much focus on mass production, that the safety and well-being of the dogs is not taken into consideration at all. Dogs are in danger, sick, and dying, all for the business to keep accumulating money. The capitalist emphasis on profit and production furthers the abuse that dogs face every day in dogfighting.

Along with the mass production that occurs in dogfighting, it is in the commodification process that the most harm and abuse towards the dogs occurs. One example of the brutal commodification that occurs in dogfighting is shown in the abuse the dogs face in order to incite fear and aggression. The more aggressive the dog is, the more successful he/she will do in the fight, and the more money the owner will make. One way in which the dogs are made to be more aggressive is by pumping them with steroids. This makes them stronger, more aggressive, and better competitors. Along with this, the dogs are either whipped, beaten, or stabbed, just before going on to fight, to ensure that they are “on fire” and aggressive during the fight (Harding, 2012, p. 162).

Besides being aggressive, the malicious owners in the dogfighting business also ensure that their dogs are submissive to their masters. This is shown in the gory process that occurs to female dogs on the rape stand. If a female dog is considered “too aggressive”, their owners force them into being raped, in order to make them more submissive. Furthermore, the dog's teeth can be pulled in order to make the process smoother. This example embodies many of the exploitative capitalist principles, with commodification in particular. This process is what allows for the owners to have their dogs be the easiest to work with, so that they can continue to mass produce and make a profit. If they have a disobedient dog, how

will they subject to abuse for profit? The commodification of the dogs in the dogfighting truly brings to light just how abusive capitalism is to those who are doing the work and producing the goods.

### **Dogs' Experiences of Marx's Self-Alienation, As a Result of Never Ending Injustice**

As discussed above, there is a lot of abuse and manipulation that occurs in both the dogfighting business and the puppy mill business. While this abuse and manipulation helps the owners to obtain as much profit as possible, it often proves to be extremely injurious to the dogs. In his work, Harding discusses how the dog owners exploit a dog's loyalty, all for profit. Specifically, Harding (2012) writes how, "people have taken the instinct of a pitbull to bond to a human, to really love its owner and they totally manipulated it, so that they're using it to engage in a fight with another dog" (p. 162). This quote shows how the dogs become completely self-alienated from how they are supposed to be, and turn into little machines for capitalism.

Harding's quote embodies the self-alienation that dogs face in both the dogfighting business and the puppy mill breeding business. In dogfighting, the dogs are trained to become so focused on their work, that their whole mentality and personality is changed. As shown in the research done by Gregory Burns, dogs are supposed to be loving and faithful animals. Instead, their owners force them to become unloving, scared, untrusting, fighters. In this self-alienation process, the dogs are exploited to bolster the power of their owner, and further detach from themselves. They go from loving companions, to slaves for their owners benefit.

The same loss of self also happens to dogs in the puppy mill breeding business. During the process, the dogs are kept in cramped, unsanitary cages, away from their mothers

too early, and have little to no human connection. Furthermore, the dogs suffer immense physically and emotionally for the rest of their lives. This shows how their personality and well-being is sacrificed, all for profit and production. Instead of starting their life in a loving home with loving owners, the dogs are forced into cramped cages and perfected until they are ready to be sold off like a piece of property. This treatment is substantiated by Torres' (2007) argument that "animals are nothing more than the means to the end of profit in contemporary capitalist production" (p. 58). This quote shows how the personality and well-being of the dogs does not matter, so they in turn lose themselves in the capitalist process.

As disputed above, the negative outcomes that come from the capitalist principles of the bourgeoisie and proletariat, private property, mass production, commodification, and self-alienation greatly affect human relations with animals. In particular, principles of capitalism allow for the socially accepted abuse of dogs in the businesses of dogfighting and puppy mill breeding. The sense of hierarchy that comes out of the exploitative relationship between the bourgeois and proletariat is what allows for the continued abuse towards dogs at the hands of their owners. This is shown in the infamous Michael Vick example, and in the fact that puppy mill owners stay within the law while simultaneously providing their dogs with minimum living standards. The societal view that the bourgeois are seen as above the proletariat is what allows for the abuse of dogs, under the guise that they are property. This is evident in the parading of injured dogs in the dogfighting business, and in the confinement of the puppies in puppy mills in their early stages of live. Since they are viewed as non-living property, like a cell phone or car, any damage done to them does not matter. Since they are viewed as property, the business owners overwork, commodify, and abuse the dogs in order to mass produce goods with the highest value. This grueling process is shown in the abuse

that dogfighting dogs face in order to be as aggressive as possible to win all fights, or the horrible living conditions puppy mill dogs are in until they are sold. Finally, it is in this process of commodification and mass production that the dogs lose all sense of self. They become completely self-alienated, and only focused on their work. In being treated like a piece of disposable property, the dogs fall into the belief that they are a piece of property, whose sole purpose is to be used for capitalist profit and gain.

Unearthing the Intersectionality of the Issue: Tying Together the Struggles of Animals,  
Women, and Nature to Stress the Urgency for Change

*“The status quo has wreaked havoc on animals and Earth. Denial and apathy must be replaced by urgency”*

*The Animal Manifesto: Six Reasons for Expanding Our Compassion Footprint* by Marc Bekoff page 2

The issue of dog abuse through capitalism is much bigger than one would believe. Not only do the exploitative behaviors that are rooted in capitalism affect human relations with animals, but the behaviors also affect human relations with women and nature. In the capitalist system, those most vulnerable are the ones who suffer the most, while those at the top continue to thrive. Earlier, I presented the argument that dogs are part of the population at the bottom, who suffer a lot at the hands of the bourgeois. While we discuss how capitalism incites a lot of damage to dogs, capitalism is also the cause of the abuse that happens to women and nature as a whole. The abuse starts at the most micro level, with dogs, leads to an even larger population in women, and is then all encompassing in the abuse of nature as a whole. The intersectionality of the issue shows just how troubling it is, and how it is imperative that we acknowledge the harm that is occurring every day in all facets of society.

In order to try and eliminate the abuse, we must break through any type of separation, whether it be based on species, gender, place in society, etc. As discussed earlier, there are critics that argue that society might not all care for animals as much. While this could be the case, do we not all have women in our lives that we care about? If not, do we all not care about the planet that we call home? Regardless of what aspect you identify with, abuse it abundant. Once the abuse in one area stops, it will trickle down to the various other arenas it affects. Claire E. Rasmussen (2011) emphasizes the pertinence of the issue when she writes how, “the recognition of animal rights is merely another step in the progressive move away

from the violent and irrational world of premodernity” (p. 98). Rasmussen reinforces the argument that respecting the rights of animals is a necessary step to standing up against the various sorts of oppression that exist today.

### **Explaining Abuse through the Lenses of Feminist Studies and Human-Animal Studies**

The inextricable relationship between the abuses that occurs in dog fighting, in the name of masculinity, calls into notice role that gender plays on the abuse towards animals that occurs in society today. The role of gender in dogfighting brings together the plights of both animals and women, much more than we would normally think. The startling example of the rape-stands in Michael Vick’s dogfighting provides an eerie insight into not only the mistreatment that happens to dogs for profit, but also for women. Furthermore, in a study done on dogfighters in the South, researchers found the dogs involved in the business symbolized their owner’s masculinity. When a dog lost a fight, the owner’s masculinity is tainted too. In order for a man to regain his masculinity, the losing dog must be killed to honor the owner (DeMello, 2012, p.119).

Both of these examples bring to light the great role that gender plays in the businesses where dog abuse occurs, and further brings feminists into the conversation of both women’s rights and animal rights. In looking at how feminist principles interact with animal abuse, we can further untangle the various reasons for the abuse that animals face.

In her work, Dawn McCance cites the reason to associate female rights with animal rights is the term dualism, the common belief in our culture that establishes the dichotomy between “us” and “them”, whether the “them” is women or animals, and the “us” is men. As McCance (2013) writes, “the man/woman and man/animal binaries are inseparable in Western thought” (p. 89). McCance’s idea of dualism is almost exactly similar to the

exploitative relationship between the bourgeois and the proletariat. The bourgeois is the “us” and the proletariat is the “them.” Capitalist principles help to further these dualist views that allow for violence today, in more than just dog industries. According to feminists who identify with animals, the fact that both women and animals are in the “them” category, is what leads to their eventual abuse. Once these dualist ideologies are shattered, men, women, and animals can all live as one, free from abuse and exploitation.

Nik Taylor furthers the connection between abuse to women and abuse to animals when she claims that the perceived difference in power between the men, women, and animals is what causes the abuse. Taylor (2013) writes how, “feminists argue that familial abuse was an outcome of differential power relations between the genders in a patriarchal society” (p. 117). According to the feminist point of view, the role of dualism in our society is what encourages men to see themselves as above the “them” in society, also known as women and animals. This sense of power and control over those seen as beneath men in society is what leads to their eventual abuse. This power struggle is shown in both our relations with women and our relations with animals. If we see something as below us, we feel that we have the power to abuse it. As mentioned before, the fact that dog owners view their dogs as property excuses the atrocities they commit towards the dogs, in the name of capitalism. Similarly, when men see women as pieces of property that are below them, the abuse soon follows. The power struggle between different facets of society is abundant, and supported by capitalist principles.

Furthermore, Taylor (2013) discusses the term “continuum of violence,” established by Liz Kelly in 1988, which also relates to the plight of both women and animals (p. 117). Kelly states that the violence towards women does not just come out of nowhere, but is

instead part of a “continuum of violence” that culminates a lot of demeaning events that all lead to the abuse of women. Kelly puts instances that are both socially acceptable, like catcalling, and events that are greatly disdained in society, like rape on the “continuum of violence” (Taylor, 2013, p. 117). Taylor adds to Kelly’s idea of the “continuum of violence,” also applying it to animals. Taylor (2013) writes how like with the treatment of women, society needs to focus on not only, “socially unacceptable behavior that intentionally causes unnecessary pain, suffering, or distress to and/or the death of an animal... but need to also address the socially acceptable forms of abuse” (p. 117-118). Taylor’s quote shows how it is a multitude of seemingly harmless actions that culminate into the abuse that occurs, and is supported by, the way our society is structured today.

It is a slippery slope when it comes to all violence, whether towards women or animals. When we excuse catcalling towards women on the street, we must prepare for the sentiments that if that is okay, so is rape. With that same notion, when we allow for children to hurt or kill animals, excusing it by saying that “boys will be boys”, then we must prepare ourselves for when those boys grow up and commit foul acts to both humans and animals. The previous example of Michael Vick’s success today also supports this theory. Since the public sees that a past dogfighting ringleader is accepted by society and placed on a pedestal, it makes us think that we can do it too, and still be welcomed into society. Once we think something is acceptable, even if it really is not, it will continue to occur. Matthew Scully (2002) discusses the seriousness of the slippery slope in perpetuating abuse in our society when he says, “ a wrong is a wrong, and often the little ones, when they are shrugged off as nothing, spread and do the gravest harm to ourselves and others” (p. xii). Vick’s crimes or

the harm done by violent children must not be brushed off by our society, because it is just planting the seed for much more abuse to occur.

### **Social Ecology, Women's Rights, Animal Rights, and Rights for All**

In his book titled *Social Ecology and Communalism*, radical theorist Murray Bookchin also comments on the dominating nature of our capitalist society today. In the work, Bookchin (2007) establishes the term “social ecology”, which is based off the belief that society’s ecological problems stem from social problems (p. 19). Specifically, Bookchin (2007) argues that, “economic, ethnic, cultural, and gender conflicts... lie at the core of the most serious ecological dislocations we face today” (Bookchin, 2007, p. 19). As Bookchin writes, the abuse that happens to both animals and women also allows for abuse to nature as a whole. Bookchin’s argument that ecological problems come directly from social problems bolsters the argument for the intersectionality of the issue of abuse in dog industries under capitalism.

While Bookchin’s argument calls out all of the atrocities in society today, it also provides a sense of hope for the future. He writes that the main ambition of social ecology is to reunite the relationship between humans and nature ( p. 12). Once the relationship between humans and nonhumans is repaired, domination will not happen. This repair will happen once the exploitative nature of capitalism is understood, and businesses like puppy mill breeding and dogfighting are no longer accepted by society as profiting businesses. We must start viewing dogs as the loving, loyal, and sentient beings they are, rather than pieces of property meant for mass production and profit. Bookchin (2007) supports the argument against capitalism when he writes how, “the hierarchical mentality and class relationships that so thoroughly permeate society are what has given rise to the very idea of dominating the

natural world” (p. 20). Bekoff (2010) also supports this idea when he argues that the hierarchy of species is used to justify our inhumane treatment of other animals (p. 28). We justify the abuse that occurs to those most vulnerable in society by saying that they are lower than us, so we can do whatever we want to them. As said all throughout the paper, once the “us” versus “them” mentality that is shown all throughout capitalism is shattered, peace and harmony for everyone will happen.

Bookchin also addresses the negative impact of the constant need for profit and mass production in capitalism when he describes how the current marketplace is extremely competitive with a “grow or die” mentality (2007, p. 20). Additionally, Bookchin (2007) describes the capitalist marketplace as a, “savagely dehumanizing competition” where, “each capitalist... must try to devour his or her rivals – or else be devoured by them” ( p. 42). Essentially, this mentality is the major principle of capitalism: companies must constantly produce, or get left behind.

The dogs in both puppy mills and dogfighting rings perfectly exemplify all of the atrocities that Bookchin argues against. The self-alienation that the dogs face in both industries shows the negative ramifications that come out of the “grow or die” mentality. The dogs in the puppy mill breeding sites must continue to live in their filthy environments until they are eventually sold, or die from the horrible living conditions before they even get to that point. The dogs in the dogfighting business must continue to participate in the brutal fights, no matter how extensive their injuries are. Once the dog is unable to fight, it is of no use to its owner, and is killed. Both examples show the capitalist “grow or die” mentality allows for gruesome abuse in dog industries. Also, the animals in the industries are “dehumanized” in our view of them as property. Once we program ourselves to see that their

lives have no value, we feel no remorse for the violence that ensues. Those who are in charge of these violent businesses must continue their exploitation, in order to compete with the capitalist market. In this continuation, more and more abuse occurs. The atrocities that Bookchin cites from our society are perfectly explicated in the various dog industries today.

**Since Sentiments for Animals are Percolating, Now Future Action is Needed!**

As discussed above, the plight of animals in our capitalist economic system is becoming more and more known to the public. For instance, these views are discussed in human-animal relations theorists, feminists, and Bookchin's idea of social ecology. The fact that these theorists are bringing to light the abuse that occurs, brings hope that one day we will live in harmony with animals. In living in harmony with animals, and all of the other vulnerable parts of society, we will learn to value and respect them, rather than use and exploit them for capitalist gain.

As of recently, there was a television commercial that perfectly mirrored all of the value and respect that we are demanding for animals. The commercial was through the hugely profitable company, Amazon. In the commercial, it shows a family cooing over a newborn child, with their dog sitting by the wayside. Rather than leaving the dog out of the family love, like a piece of unwanted property, the family instead finds a way to include the dog in the happy family. This example further shows that the ideas to treat animals, with dogs in particular, as living beings that should be part of the family, are definitely out there. Since the ideas are already present, we just have to keep the conversation going.

Animals are not created to be slaves to the capitalist elite as trophies, food, or entertainment. They are living, breathing, loving, and feeling beings that should be here on this planet with us, rather than for us. The principles of capitalism help to mitigate the belief

that some lives matter more than others, and that belief is shown to have a negative impact on many aspects of society. Our hope is that this work further adds to the scholarly conversation, and plants the seed in people's mind that abuse is out there and not going anywhere, until we recognize the influence that our economic institutions has on how we treat our fellow peers in society.

## References

- Animal Fighting Case Study: Michael Vick. (n.d.). Retrieved November 22, 2017 from <http://aldf.org/resources/laws-cases/animal-fighting-case-study-michael-vick/>
- Barnes, K. (2017). Commercial Dog Breeders and Puppy Mills. *Michigan State University Animal Legal and Historical Center*. Retrieved from <https://www.animallaw.info/intro/commercial-dog-breeders-and-puppy-mills>
- Bekoff, M. (2010). *The Animal Manifesto: Six Reasons for Expanding Our Compassion Footprint*. California: New World Library.
- Berns, G. (2013, October). Dogs are People, Too. *The New York Times*, 1-4.
- Bishop, J. D. (2000). *Ethics and Capitalism*. University of Toronto Press.
- Bookchin, M. (2007). *Social Ecology and Communalism*. Edinburgh: AK Press.
- DeMello, M. (2012). *Animals and Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Derber, C., & Magrass, Y. R. (2016). *Bully Nation*. University Press of Kansas
- Francione, G. (2000). *Introduction to Animal Rights: Your Child or the Dog?* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Francione, G., & Garner, G. (2010). *The Animal Rights Debate: Abolition or Regulation?* New York: Columbia University Press.
- Harding, S. (2012). *Unleashed: The Phenomena of Status Dogs and Weapon Dogs*. Policy Press at the University of Bristol.
- Harvey, J. (2017). Companion and Assistance Animals: Benefits, Welfare Safeguards, and

- Relationships. In Overall, C. (Ed.), *Pets and People: The Ethics of Our Relationships with Companion Animals* (pp. 3-20). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Macur, J. (2008, February). Given Reprieve, N.F.L Star's Dogs Find Kindness. *The New York Times*.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1848). *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.
- Marx, K. (1867). *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*.
- McCance, D. (2013). *Critical Animal Studies: An Introduction*. Albany: State University of New York.
- Nibert, D. (2013). *Animal Oppression and Human Violence: Domesecration , Capitalism, and Global Conflict*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Nibert, D. (2002). *Animal Rights/Human Rights*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Nibert, D. (2013). *Animal Oppression and Human Violence: Domesecration, Capitalism, and Global Conflict*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Perdue, A., & Lockwood, R. (2014) *Animal Cruelty and Freedom of Speech: When Worlds Collide*. Purdue University Press.
- Petrovic, G. (1963). Marx's Theory of Alienation. *Philosophy and Phenomenological*
- Rasmussen, C. (2011). *The Autonomous Animal: Self-Governance and the Modern Subject*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Rossi, J. (2017). Our Whimsy, Their Welfare: On the Ethics of Pedigree-Breeding. In Overall, C. (Ed.), *Pets and People: The Ethics of Our Relationships with Companion Animals* (pp. 111-126). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Scully, M. (2002). *Dominion: The Power of Man, The Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Singer, P. (2009). *Animal Liberation: The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Taylor, Nik (2013). *Humans, Animals, and Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies*. Brooklyn, New York: Lantern Books.

Thomas, L. (1979). Capitalism versus Marx's Communism. *Studies in Soviet Thought*, 20(1), 67-79.

Torres, B. (2007) *Making a Killing: The Political Economy of Animal Rights*. Oakland, Edinburgh, West Virginia: AK Press.