

## **Stories about nonhuman animals: a multimodal analysis of vegan campaigns**

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### ***Abstract***

Vegan campaigns are frequently seen nowadays due to the rise of veganism. When these campaigns create stories, i.e. cognitive models which influence how people think, talk and act, it is important to consider both language and images. This article presents findings from a multimodal analysis of the two vegan campaigns, Be Fair Be Vegan and Go Vegan World. The image analysis was conducted with Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) *Grammar of Visual Design*; the language analysis used van Leeuwen's (2008) *Social Actor and Action*. The interpretation of stories adopted Stibbe's (2015) framework for analysing. Findings from the language and image analyses include that such features related to nonhuman animals as specification, personalization, anthropomorphism, mental and material processes characterize the campaigns' language, while the images show narrative and conceptual representation, highlight demand, featuring straight-on angle and close distance. The analysis of the campaigns' language and images established that they create the stories of salience, ideology, and conviction which represent nonhuman animals as sentient beings, similar to humans in many ways.

Key words: multimodality, nonhuman animals, posters, stories, vegan

## **1. Introduction**

This article demonstrates how both language and image are important in creating stories in the discourse about *nonhuman animals*, in particular, who<sup>1</sup> they are and what kind of relationship is established between humans and other animals. The definition of stories in this article is borrowed from Stibbe (2015) where, in contrast with ordinary narratives told for entertainment, stories are defined as cognitive structures that exist in the minds of people and which influence how they think, talk, or act. The term *nonhuman animals* refers to animals other than humans in order to avoid speciesism, the view that only humans deserve to be morally considered (Joy, 2011). Veganism is “a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose” (The Vegan Society, 2019). In veganism, the focus is on *nonhuman animals* and that they are sentient beings who deserve to live their own lives. As veganism is particularly concerned with *nonhuman animals*, this article explores campaigns related to veganism in order to see whether their stories reflect the purpose of the campaigns where *nonhuman animals*, similar to humans, stand as sentient living beings with their own lives and who deserve to live without human exploitation. One way to put these stories across is by establishing a connection between human and *nonhuman animals* which may be created when humans do not merely perceive *nonhuman animals* as products and things, but look at them as sentient beings who, similar to humans, experience a range of feelings, want to live their lives, and create social ties. The researchers studied whether vegan campaigns could be an example of how the two modes, language and image, shape the stories and can be applied to representing *nonhuman animals* in a beneficial light. In particular, images were analysed based on Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) *Grammar of Visual Design*, while the language mode was approached with van Leeuwen’s (2008) *Social Actor and Action*. In order to see whether *nonhuman animals* were represented in a beneficial light, the stories had to be identified which reflected Stibbe’s (2015) framework for analysing.

There have been previous studies done with regard to nonhuman animal representation, particularly, in the discourses of animal agriculture, such as the meat, dairy, and egg industries as well as discourses of animal liberation (Jacobs, Teh, & Joyce, 2016; Shapiro, 1995; Stibbe, 2001, 2012). With regard to veganism, these are texts related to animal rights, the relationship between

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<sup>1</sup> In order to stay consistent with the nonspeciesist language, *nonhuman animals* are referred to as “who”.

human and *nonhuman animals*, and awareness campaigns where the idea of veganism is put across. The focus of this article is the representation of *nonhuman animals* in the light of veganism advocacy, in particular, two established vegan campaigns, “Be Fair Be Vegan” (BFBV) and “Go Vegan World” (GWV). The study explores the ways *nonhuman animals* are represented in the language and image of campaign posters. The posters promoting veganism may shed light on who *nonhuman animals* are and how they are regarded or should be regarded.

Findings from the language and image analyses include that such features in relation to *nonhuman animals* as specification, personalization, anthropomorphism, mental and material processes characterize the campaigns’ language, while the images show narrative and conceptual representation, highlight demand, featuring straight-on angle and close distance. Based on these findings, the following stories were identified: salience, ideology, and conviction which all together tend to represent *nonhuman animals* as sentient beings, similar to humans in many ways.

## 2. Literature Review

As this article delineates a multimodal analysis of vegan campaigns where veganism and nonhuman animal rights often go hand in hand (McDonald, 2000, Larsson *et al.* 2003, Cole and Morgan, 2011), it is worth looking into the research previously done on the campaigns related to *nonhuman animals*, their rights, and, in particular, veganism.

Springirth (2016) analyses the discourse of activist organizations such as PETA and The Vegan Society to understand their ideology. The analysis showed that vegan activism is portrayed mainly as an economic activity where activists are treated as consumers. The study was done not to discount the efforts of nonhuman animal rights organizations, but to be cautious of the discourse being used as it may suggest that veganism is primarily an economic activity and activists themselves do not need to do anything except consume ‘cruelty-free’ products (Springirth, 2016).

Moore (2014) studied an award-winning animal welfare campaign based on mock recipe cards where instead of a recipe, readers are provided with information about the conditions under which the farming of *nonhuman animals* for meat takes place. The author incorporated systemic functional linguistics, socio- and ecolinguistics to look into different language features that make meat eating as well as factory farming appear to be natural. Moore (2014) particularly looked into “the absent referent” phenomenon (Adams, 2004), a detail that refers to a nonhuman animal who is excluded from the text, for example, a pig is the absent referent in pork. The author pointed out

that the absent referent contributed to the oppression of *nonhuman animals* (Moore, 2014). Another aspect addressed in this study was the relation between ‘major and minor identities’ (Lakoff, 2006) and how the identity is mobilized in dominant and emerging ideologies (Moore, 2014).

Among other studies, the “Go Veg” campaign study (Freeman, 2010) addressed how organizations framed issues related to *nonhuman animals*. The four frames were identified as cruelty and suffering, commodification, harm to humans and the environment, and needless killing. Nonhuman animal rights organization campaigns also associate veganism with altruism, health, environmental responsibility and humanitarianism (Freeman, 2010). The author recommended vegan campaigns highlighting respect, justice, life, freedom, environmental responsibility and a shared animality.

Research on the discourse about *nonhuman animals*, however, not vegan campaigns, has been more frequent, such as studies on agriculture related texts, coursebooks providing information on *nonhuman animals* and environment, newspapers. In the agriculture related texts including textbooks, articles and studies, *nonhuman animals* are not regarded as sentient living beings or individuals, rather they are presented as inanimate objects that can be produced, bought and used for human purposes. For example, in Silbergeld’s (2019) article on the food animal production and the agricultural transition, poultry production is discussed where phrases like ‘poultry breed’, ‘an older retired egg layer’, ‘the broiler was easy to cook, (...), cheap to purchase’, ‘was boiled and served’ are used throughout the article. This kind of language makes it hard to recognize that the discussion is held about living nonhuman beings, chickens, however this connection is hidden behind such linguistic devices as nominalization ‘production’, functionalization ‘egg layer’, metonymy ‘broiler’, ‘poultry’ and passive voice ‘was boiled and served’.

Mary Kahn (1992) wrote a paper which reveals the lack of the active voice forms of verbs in texts about animal experimentation (‘were skinned’). There is a “consistent use of the passive voice to avoid the appearance of responsibility” (Kahn, 1992, p. 242). She also pointed out that it is done in a way that in the passive construction the doer of the action has disappeared and replaced by the deed, which in turn comes out “sterile and isolated, accomplished without human input” (Kahn, 1992, p. 242).

There has not been done much research specifically on vegan campaigns; the studies that have been conducted on campaigns related to *nonhuman animals* or veganism have employed different approaches, however, the multimodality aspect where both linguistic and visual characteristics could be seen, has not been largely applied. In addition, even though themes may have been mentioned in the above campaigns, there has not been any focus on how *nonhuman animals* are represented in images or language.

The present article addresses these gaps by incorporating a multimodal approach in vegan campaigns with both language and image analyses which leads to identifying the stories (based on Stibbe's (2015) forms of stories) that consist of language and image and are related to the representation of *nonhuman animals*. It also demonstrates how campaign posters, hence advertising posters, can be approached from the multimodal perspective.

### **3. Methodology**

The data of this study consisted of 38 posters of the US campaign Be Fair Be Vegan from years 2016-2018 (BFBV, 2018), and 30 posters of the UK campaign Go Vegan World from years 2015-2018 (GVW, 2018). The posters were obtained from the campaign websites and by contacting the organizers who gave their consent to use the data.

Be Fair Be Vegan is the first high-profile vegan billboard campaign in the US (Be Fair Be Vegan, 2018) aiming to bring awareness regarding veganism.

The Go Vegan World campaign was the first large scale national public campaign in Europe run by Eden Farmed Animal Sanctuary. The aim of the campaign, is to demonstrate the inconsistency between human values and their behaviour with regard to *nonhuman animals* (Go Vegan World, 2018).

In order to identify the stories created by the campaign posters, a multimodal approach was adopted. Multimodality is emphasized in this article as it helps to elaborate in more detail on the construction of meaning which is created in these campaigns by both language and image modes. Three frameworks are used in this study: a socio-semantic approach to social actor and action, image analysis and analysis of stories. The language part of the multimodal analysis adopts a Social actor and Social Action (van Leeuwen, 2008) framework that expands on different lexicogrammatical features as well as transitivity patterns of language. In the present article, only selected features of this framework are explored as they have been seen to be the most relevant.

Each campaign poster refers to nonhuman animal actors, therefore, it is essential to trace whether they perform active roles; whether they are activated or passivated. Further, individualization is part of the analysis which is understood as referring to *nonhuman animals* individually, e.g. using names or pronouns “he”, “she”, “someone”. Whether *nonhuman animals* are represented as someone described with human like characteristics (“curious”, “trusting”) or not is determined through personalization and impersonalization. In addition, whether *nonhuman animals* are portrayed as a group (“they”) or a specific entity (“a mother”, “he”) is interpreted through genericization and specification. Under the social action network, it is questioned whether social actors are involved in different actions, such as material when actors perform physical actions (e.g. “run”), or reactions (e.g. “love”). It is also important to see if *nonhuman animals* themselves perform an action, hence they are activated, or humans are the ones who perform an action (e.g. “babies are taken from their mothers”). Van Leeuwen’s framework (2008) is beneficial in this study as it allows to see detailed patterns of how *nonhuman animals* are represented as participants of the campaigns as well as what actions they are shown to be capable of performing.

Based on Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) framework used to analyse the images, representation is concerned with vectors, directions created by actors’ eyes, hands, arms, etc. As a result, representation comes down to narrative, where vectors connect the represented participants who are seen to be doing something to or for each other, or conceptual with the participants being represented with regards to their generalized essence, structure or meaning (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). Interaction is characterized by the gaze (either demand images where actors are looking at the viewer, or offer, where actors are not looking at the viewer), distance from the viewer, and angle (horizontal or eye-level and vertical) at which the represented participants are portrayed.

In both campaigns, the verbal aspects are integrated with the visual aspects. Therefore the multimodal analysis is particularly relevant as it addresses each of the aspects as well as their interrelation. To illustrate, nonhuman actors may be activated in language by taking a subject position in a phrase or a sentence and expressing a feeling typically associated with humans, but by being genericized (e.g. “they grieve”) it may seem that the author generalizes all *nonhuman animals* in their abilities. In this case, it is the image that brings the readers’ attention to *nonhuman animals* as individuals as it depicts the individual nonhuman animal expressing “grief”. In addition, through the interaction, a close distance and a horizontal angle in which the actor is portrayed as

giving the power to the represented actor, as well as engaging the viewer in their world. By considering both language and image, one can see that each nonhuman animal is represented as an individual, similar to humans, and this could become the part which might be missed if we were to analyse solely the verbal aspect. As such, the study employs the socio-semantic framework of Van Leeuwen (2008) alongside image analysis (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006) as both provide significant information in terms of the stories.

Stories, defined as cognitive structures (see Section 1), are based on Stibbe's classification (2015, p. 17) and can be regarded as the following eight different forms that stories take.

**Table 1: Eight forms that stories take (Stibbe 2015, p.17)**

<b>Form of story</b>	<b>Definition</b>
1. Ideology	A story about how the world is and should be which is shared by members of a group
2. Framing	A story that uses a frame (a packet of knowledge about an area of life) to structure another area of life
3. Metaphors	A story that uses a frame to structure a distinct and clearly different area of life
4. Evaluation	A story about whether an area of life is good or bad
5. Identity	A story about what it means to be a particular kind of person
6. Conviction	A story about whether a particular description of the world is true, uncertain or false
7. Erasure	A story that an area of life is unimportant or unworthy of consideration
8. Salience	A story that an area of life is important and worthy of consideration

There could be different ways of analysing vegan campaigns, however, the chosen one in this article with the adoption of three frameworks gives multiple facets to the interpretation of the data. It helps to see how language and image used in the vegan campaigns portray *nonhuman animals* and construct the stories, whether these stories are aligned with the purposes of the campaigns, and whether *nonhuman animals* are represented in a beneficial light. Multimodal analysis is essential as these are the image and language features that indicate a particular story in the campaigns.

## 4. Results

The analysis first identifies the language features of the campaigns, followed by the image features, and further discusses the contribution of both language and image to the stories presented in the campaigns. The most identified features are accompanied by one example from each campaign which also points to the similarities between the two campaigns.

### 4.1 Language Analysis

Throughout the campaigns two kinds of social actors can be noticed – nonhuman and human animals, and social action that can be mainly expressed through transitivity structures of material and mental processes (van Leeuwen, 2008, p.33).

#### 4.1.1 Instances of activation

*Nonhuman animals* are activated in a number of different ways throughout the campaigns. To begin with, they are represented as agents by taking a subject position in sentences and phrases, for example “They hope like we do” where “they” is a subject (Fig.1). Activation is realized through the transitivity structure in which *nonhuman animals* are coded as sensors in mental processes – affective reactions, e.g. “hope, love, want” in Figures 1, 2, 4 suggesting that the actors are able to express different emotions (Bekoff, 2000). Traditionally, it is common to hear humans refer to their animal companions such as cats and dogs in a way that they are capable of loving and having different desires, however, when it comes to farm animals, they are rather mentioned as livestock devoid of feelings.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Agency is not denied which presents them as active sentient living beings who have their mental lives which goes in contrast with animal industry discourse where *nonhuman animals* are represented as machines, objects, or resources (Stibbe, 2003) that can be used for particular benefits such as food, clothes, or other purposes.

Activation is also realized when *nonhuman animals* are involved in material processes. It should be noted, however, that material processes carried out by *nonhuman animals* in the posters are not many, while material processes performed by humans towards nonhuman beings prevail, which points to passivation of the latter. Moreover, image plays an important role when it comes to portraying *nonhuman animals* performing physical actions. In Figure 3 it says “They care” where the mother cow is seen displaying physical care towards a baby of a different species, a piglet who is leaning towards her. The action of care can be demonstrated in both physical (hugging) and non-physical (listening, worrying) ways, and therefore, can be both understood as material and mental processes. In these posters, with the help of the visual representation, it is shown that *nonhuman animals* physically show care towards other species. Figure 4 says that “they want to stay alive” and shows a lamb hopping suggesting that *nonhuman animals* are active living beings who want to express themselves as the ones who perform physical actions.



Figure 3



Figure 4

In Figure 5 the participant is even represented as a sayer, possessing the ability to vocally express feelings – “despair”.

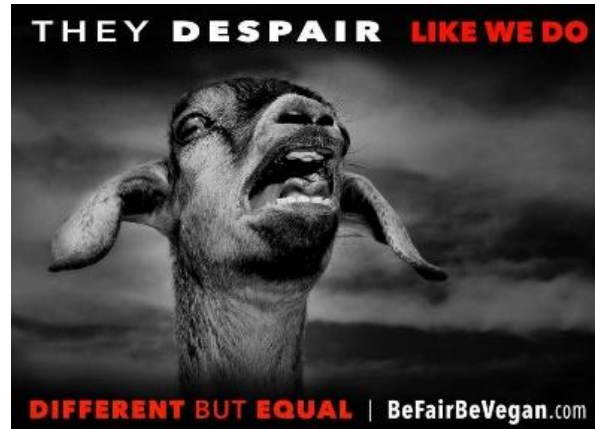


Figure 5

Referring to *nonhuman animals* as mothers and babies (Fig.6-7), ones who can feel, (Fig.1-5) signals that *nonhuman animals* are able to create families, i.e. experience things that humans do, which in turn attempts to minimize the distance between humans and non-humans.



Figure 6

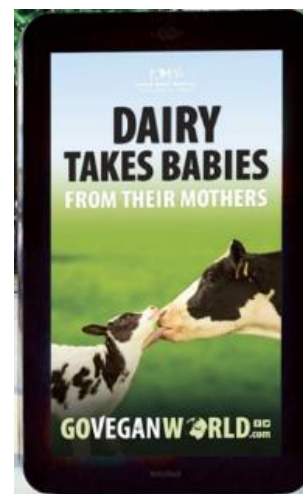


Figure 7

This is also an example of anthropomorphism where the characteristics of humans are given to nonhuman beings. In a number of posters, the producer uses personality features to describe *nonhuman animals*, Figures 8-9.



Figure 8



Figure 9

In these posters, each of the represented *nonhuman animals* is portrayed in the language and the images as a sentient living being. Besides anthropomorphism, there is individualization as each nonhuman animal is described as having their own individuality, instead of being referred to as *nonhuman animals* in general. The nonhuman actors are not generally shown at the level of collective nouns, for example, a group or heard, instead, the attention is brought to the individual nonhuman being represented in the campaign and described with a number of adjectives like “cautious, brave, trusting” (Fig.9). The adjectives are mainly positive, which is a sign of appraisal of social actors. This contributes to a positive representation of *nonhuman animals*, and may evoke a positive reaction from the reader towards them as, by using these descriptive adjectives, people can connect to *nonhuman animals*, relate to them through seeing similarity in character between humans and nonhuman species.

The example of individualization in language throughout the campaigns is when *nonhuman animals* are referred to as “he / his” (e.g. Fig.10) or “she / her” (e.g. Fig.11) and “person” (e.g. Fig.19) and “someone” (e.g. Fig.12).

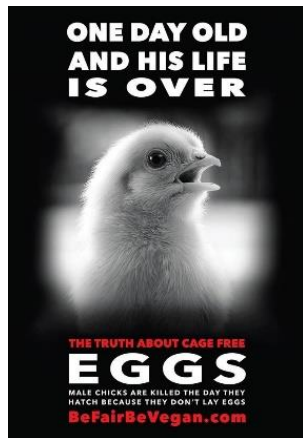


Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12

Not all posters reflect individuality in nonhuman participants, and genericization is also observed through the pronoun “they” as seen in Figures 1-5 signifying collectivization, referring to them as a group, not individually (van Leeuwen, 2008, p.37). However, this is again an example when the other mode – image – is capable of strengthening or weakening the message expressed in the language. Even though in the above-mentioned posters the participants are referred to as “they” in language, the image shows an individual living being who is either performing an action (the sheep is hopping, Fig.4) or expressing a feeling (despair, Fig.5) and in Figure 3 the *nonhuman animals* of two different species represented individually are expressing care towards each other.

#### 4.1.2 Instances of passivation

Besides *nonhuman animals* being represented as active living beings in their own lives, there are also instances when they are passivated which could lead to the perception of them as being weaker or less significant. Even though grammatically *nonhuman animals* are placed in the subject position (Fig.6, 9 “baby calves are taken / killed”) they are used in the passive voice where something is done to them. In such posters, material processes, “are taken, killed, forced”, are performed by humans towards *nonhuman animals*, and the social action is characterized as an instrumental transaction where humans “consume” milk that belongs to calves, “kill, take” male chicks, calves, “force” hens to overproduce eggs (Fig.16). In each of these examples, *nonhuman animals* become goals of human material actions.



Figure 13



Figure 14

Another feature to pay attention to is objectivation through nominalization (Fig.15 “killing”, Fig.16 “cripling”, “suffering”), actions turned into nouns, gerunds, denoting the process “to kill”, “to cripple”, “to suffer”.



Figure 15

Nominalization is a particularly powerful device of erasure (Stibbe, 2015, p. 147) of the doers of those actions and erasure of the amount of pain and feelings involved in these processes. It leads to downgrading the impact of the overall process of producing milk and eggs or the consequence of isolating *nonhuman animals*. The overall textual information presented throughout the two campaigns suggests that human actors perform more material processes targeted directly at nonhuman actors; humans are also seen as beneficiaries from those actions directed at non-



humans. *Nonhuman animals* in these posters are passivated and not seen as performing any actions they would otherwise do should they be in more natural conditions.

In the BFBV and GVW campaigns, it is implied that humans equally perform some of the actions that *nonhuman animals* do. In fact, *nonhuman animals* are accentuated through being put in the subject position in cases where humans may seem to be more superior (according to the common perception) as those are *nonhuman animals* who are compared to humans and not the other way around (“they grieve like we do” meaning that *nonhuman animals* do something like humans do, not “we grieve like they do” – not that humans grieve like *nonhuman animals* do). This can be explained by the existence of anthropocentrism in human perception of nature, and this campaign attempts to argue that humans are not the only beings with the capacity to experience feelings and lead their own lives. It could also be suggested that in order to assign intrinsic worth to *nonhuman animals* and relate more to them, we need to see *nonhuman animals* as someone doing things that are familiar to us. It is worth pointing out that it is not common to see in language *nonhuman animals* being compared to humans. In contrast, when humans are compared to *nonhuman animals*, it often has a negative connotation, for example idiomatic expressions “eat like a pig”, “work like a dog”. This campaign attempts to bring *nonhuman animals* in a different light.

Furthermore, in a number of posters, such as Figures 6-11, 13-15, objectivation is particularly emphasized when the lives of *nonhuman animals* are associated with products that can be obtained from them. In Figures 6, 7, and 9, the life and wellbeing of the calves is connected with milk and dairy products like cheese (Fig.9 “Which calf should die for your cheese”) meaning that because humans need milk and dairy products in substantial quantities, it is taken from calves who are, in their turn, either killed (males) or raised in isolation (females) to further produce milk and replace the cows who are not able to do it anymore. Similarly, a sheep is associated with wool (Fig.13), chicks with eggs and the products made from eggs (Fig. 8,10,14,16), and a calf with meat (Fig.15).



Figure 16

However, the objectivation traced in these examples is not the same objectivation that can be seen in agriculture related texts, for example, where *nonhuman animals* as sentient living beings are removed from the discourse (e.g. pigs are associated with machines that produce sausages). In the GVW and BFBV campaigns, a nonhuman animal is foregrounded as an individual, a living being that humans perceive as products. The posters 17, 19, 23 provide another example of a contrast between the *nonhuman animals* as individuals and the products associated with them. There is an opposition firmly established through the negative marker “not” such as “someone, not seafood”, “possession, not food” respectively. These pairs of words also draw attention to the opposition of such linguistic phenomena as personalization and impersonalization, activation and passivation as, for example in poster 19 “person” is an individual, a living being, while “possession” is rather something inanimate that can be owned and used by humans. Therefore, it cannot be firmly criticized that the objectivation used in these campaigns, downgrades *nonhuman animals*, it is rather done to create a contrast between living beings and products obtained from them, which, in turn, has a potential to emphasize the nonhuman animal’s life.



Figure 17

Foregrounding *nonhuman animals* in language although they are not performing any actions can further be seen throughout the campaigns.

In Figure 11, it says “She has one precious life”, and there is a further connection to the readers’ “dinner”. Using the personal pronoun “she” and the word “precious” suggests that not only is this sheep an individual, but also that she has one life that she does not want to lose, which, in turn, foregrounds the nonhuman animal.

Such techniques as individualization and personalization can also be regarded as anthropomorphism (Aggarwal and McGill, 2007, p. 468) when assigning the human characteristics to non-humans. Anthropomorphism can constantly be traced, such as in Figure 16 “suffering for her”, and “she has one precious life” in Figure 11. In the English grammar *nonhuman animals* are referred to by an inanimate pronoun “it” (Halliday, 1992) which signifies inanimacy and tends to diminish *nonhuman animals* to a property status. However, throughout the campaign posters *nonhuman animals* are individualized through the possessive adjectives “his” and “her” which brings *nonhuman animals* more significance and acknowledgement as living beings having their own lives.

## 4.2 Image Analysis

Image is another mode in these campaigns that plays an important role in strengthening a message conveyed through language.

Throughout the posters the images are both narrative and conceptual. If it is a narrative representation, the represented participants are connected to each other by vectors which helps a



particular narrative to unfold. For example, in a medium shot in Figure 18, action processes are seen – a mother and babies, an actor and a goal – through vectors (the beak and the wings), the mother is directing her movements toward the babies as if protecting them. The image is accompanied by the words “they raise families like we do” and the mother in the image displays care to her babies as a human mother would normally do, while babies seek her protection.



Figure 18

In addition, bidirectional processes are also observed – each participant is playing a role of a reactor (a cow and a piglet in Fig.3, a cow and a calf in Fig.7, where both are active doers of the actions).

Figures 3, 7, 18 are “offer” images where nonhuman participants are not looking at the viewer, but instead are engaged in their own activities. Offer images are the ones where the viewer is not involved in the lives of the participants, but is rather detached and offered to look at the represented participants possibly more objectively and not be forced to enter into a relationship like demand pictures have a capacity to do. The language part plays a particularly important role here as, while the viewers are not forced to enter into a relationship with the represented *nonhuman animals*, they are able to observe and contemplate the kind of behavior referred to in the textual part of the posters.

Furthermore, the angle at which the nonhuman participants are represented is straight-on both in close or medium distance shots. Angle is another important aspect of the interaction side of images which demonstrates power relationships (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, p. 140), in particular, whether a represented participant holds any power with regards to the viewer. In the examined cases of the campaigns, the angle is mainly horizontal, and at eye level which suggests that whoever is looking at the image is not superior towards the represented *nonhuman animals*,

and thus the relationship established is of equal nature, regardless of the different species the participants may belong to.

In both campaigns, the viewer can also observe the vectors connecting human and *nonhuman animals* who, in turn, are involved in some actions. Mainly, it is a human participant who is likely to be initiating an action.



Figure 19



Figure 20

These kinds of images, particularly Figure 19, tells a narrative of humans being more powerful and superior towards *nonhuman animals* who, in turn, offer no resistance, suggesting that they are in a weaker position. In Figure 20, the mouse shows no fear and by reaching out to a human shows trust that the human will not hurt him/her. Even though the narrative does exhibit that the human is more superior, the angle at which nonhuman participants are represented is straight-on which suggests the absence of a power imbalance between the viewer, hence, human, and *nonhuman animals*. In addition, the demand image (Fig.19) engages the viewer into the nonhuman participant's world and the circumstances they are facing. The offer image (Fig.20) invites the viewer to contemplate the portrayed circumstances where the mouse displays trust towards the human.

The other kind of representation is conceptual where *nonhuman animals* are not connected by vectors to any other actors but simply engaged in their own activity or looking at the viewer. When nonhuman participants look straight at the viewer, they demand engagement with the viewer. As pointed out by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 118), depicting participants (whether

humans or not) as the ones looking at the viewer, adds human qualities which shows a degree of “anthropomorphism” (Aggarwal and McGill 2007, p. 468).



Figure 21

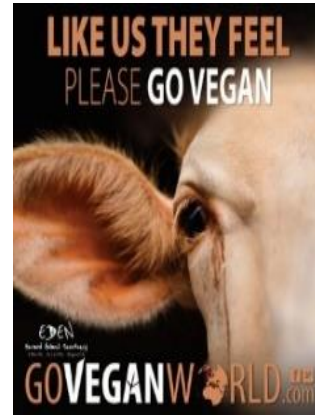


Figure 22

In Figure 21, each chick has a different facial expression, not necessarily looking at the viewer. These images show a non-transactional process, with no phenomenon (goal), “done to” or “aimed at” anyone or anything. However, there is a reactional process where the viewer is not able to identify what the participant is looking at.

In Figure 22, the cow is looking straight at the viewer who, in turn, can see the cow’s tear suggesting sadness the represented participant is feeling. In Figure 4, the lamb is involved in some activity – running or hopping in the natural environment, he or she seems to be joyful and enjoying life, hence the caption “they want to stay alive” which resonates with the image. There are no vectors to connect the sheep with anyone or anything else in the image to show some action, nor there is any reactional process unfolding between the sheep and someone else.

The majority of conceptual images are demand images, with the straight on angle, close or medium distance.

This kind of representation may serve to identify the carrier, the one depicted in the poster, as well as let viewers scrutinize the carrier’s attributes (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 89). In particular, the viewer can observe the feelings experienced by the *nonhuman animals* in the images, either the feeling of joy (Fig.4), sadness (Fig.22) or even curiosity (Fig.21). This gives an opportunity to contemplate that these are sentient living beings who, similarly to humans, are affected by the circumstances which cause a range of feelings.

In terms of images such as Figures 11 and 23, the viewer looks at the *nonhuman animals* from a slightly high angle which often suggests dominance over the represented participants. It might be the case here as the represented participants are typically farm animals where they are dominated by humans, however, Figures 11 and 23 represent babies looking up at a human. It could be suggested that they need protection, encouraging the viewer to establish a rather close relationship with other animals and at the same time feel empathy towards them.



Figure 23

## 5. Results and Discussion

The language and image analyses help to identify three main stories across the two campaigns: salience, conviction, ideology as well as the elements of erasure. Salience (Stibbe, 2015, p. 161) is the first story where the focus is on *nonhuman animals*, the fact that they are living beings with the capacity to feel and having their own needs. Both in language and image *nonhuman animals* are depicted as sentient beings (e.g. “they want, feel, trust, care, raise families”, “she, he, it, person”), having lives with their interests, capable of performing material and mental processes. The campaigns particularly emphasize the feelings (e.g, “care, feel, grieve, brave, trusting”) experienced by *nonhuman animals* (cows, calves, sheep, pigs, chickens), as they are commonly assigned the purpose of being consumed as food (Joy, 2011; Adams, 2004). Salience is especially achieved through the image where *nonhuman animals*, with the help of a gaze, engage the viewer into their world that appears to be real. In addition, the horizontal angle gives an opportunity to establish a relationship of equal nature (without humans being regarded as superior to *nonhuman animals* (Lawrence, 1995)), which works to eliminate speciesism (Cole and Morgan, 2011, p. 135). The story can be summarised as follows: *nonhuman animals* are living beings who, equal to humans, have feelings, wants and needs.

Conviction (Stibbe, 2015, p.127) portrays *nonhuman animals* as equals to humans, being able to experience a range of feelings and go through experiences in life (nurturing babies, caring for the family) like humans do, not to mention, that they are individuals (Alger and Alger, 2003). A clear affirmative phrase “just like us” emphasizes that nonhuman species, like humans, are gendered, male and female, mothers who have babies, capable of experiencing mental processes, e.g. love, feeling, trust (Bekoff, 2000), they also value their own life and do not wish it to be taken from them (“precious life”). Through images that strongly support the language, the viewer can see acts of joy, love, care, sadness, affection – the feelings experienced by nonhuman actors along with the depicted nonhuman baby animals inviting the viewer to enter into their world to protect and relate to them (demand image). The way comparison is seen in BFBV and GVW may not necessarily be there to equalize non-human and human species, rather to highlight that they both have feelings and are capable of performing different activities. The campaigns point out that humans are not the only species to be able to do so. The conviction put into this story is twofold; the first suggesting that *nonhuman animals* are similar to humans and the second is that people’s beliefs about animal products are wrong.

The third story is ideology (Stibbe, 2015, p. 22) where, by referring to nonhuman beings as those who have an intrinsic value (Naess, 1989), biocentrism is emphasized. The ideology of biocentrism results from referring to anthropocentrism that runs in contrast with biocentrism (Attfield, 2014) across the campaigns. Both language and image portray *nonhuman animals* as sentient beings and individuals. Each poster, however, also involves humans, particularly in language, who are depicted as having more power (e.g. “like us”, “They trust us, we betray them”, “Which calf should die for your cheese”). The affirmative and complete campaign statements such as “She has one precious life”, “All prejudice is learned, unlearn speciesism”, “Person, not possession”, claim that nonhuman beings are sentient living individuals (she, he) who value their lives (precious). “Would your dinner/lunch take its (life)?” strongly suggests that if people see *nonhuman animals* as beings with their intrinsic values and care about them, then the food consumption patterns and beliefs have to change.

A contrast between biocentrism and anthropocentrism is also seen in language “They trust us, we betray them”, “Person not possession” where the campaigns demonstrate that *nonhuman animals* are trusting and innocent living beings, but humans use this trust to turn them into victims of human consumption. The biocentric approach of the message, however, is seen where, in

language, “they” comes first and in image, through a horizontal angle the reader is involved in the nonhuman animal’s circumstances, by this pointing to the absence of a dichotomic representation of *nonhuman animals* (Fusari, 2018). The story may be summarized as all life is important.

Some evidence points to another story, erasure (Stibbe, 2015, p. 145) which could be summarized in a way that *nonhuman animals* live in an anthropocentric world. In order for the anthropocentric world to exist, *nonhuman animals* have to be erased or backgrounded as living beings with their own intrinsic values so that humans can look past these values. These features can be noticed in language when there is a mention of animal products for human consumption (e.g. “your lunch”, “possession”), as well as a portrayal of *nonhuman animals* as victims by being victimized (e.g. “take his life”, “animal testing”) where material processes are mainly assigned to people, the victims of which *nonhuman animals* become. In images, erasure features can also be observed where a conceptual representation of *nonhuman animals* prevails, in particular, where they are not doing anything but looking at the viewer. When humans are included in the image, they often either reach out to *nonhuman animals* from a high angle, or use them for their own benefit, such as labour (Fig.19).

However, it is questionable whether these techniques erase *nonhuman animals* as sentient beings. To elaborate on this, each time passivation takes place, activation is noticed as well where *nonhuman animals* are depicted as living beings with their lives and values. To illustrate, in language, these are features that contribute to salience such as portraying social actors as sensors (e.g. “love, feeling, trust”), specification through determination (e.g. “mothers, babies, male calves”), personalization (e.g. “she, he”), which together represent nonhuman beings similar to humans, and anthropomorphizing – “seeing humans in nonhuman forms” (Aggarwal and McGill, 2007, p. 468). In images of both campaigns, BFBV and GVW, *nonhuman animals* are often involved in different actions, such as expressing joy, crying, running, relaxing, or a relationship of affection between a mother and a baby. *Nonhuman animals* are also pictured at a close or medium distance, horizontal angle where they are looking straight at the viewer. All together, these features do not distance the viewers, but bring them closer, involve them in a nonhuman animal’s life, demand attention and show the absence of hierarchy in power. In addition, the fact that *nonhuman animals* become victims of human choices is clearly specified. To compare, in industry discourses, such as meat, dairy, and egg, victims tend to be erased (Stibbe, 2012; 2015) whereby the language avoids mentioning that *nonhuman animals* suffer or become victimized.

Therefore, it can be stated that, similar to how contrast is created between biocentrism and anthropocentrism with the focus on a biocentric view, there is a contrast between salience and erasure. The campaign posters do not erase the individuality in nonhuman beings. Each poster assigns an intrinsic value to their lives. The presence of erasure techniques, however, suggests the producer's hope that viewers can not only connect with *nonhuman animals* on a rather personal level but also see the consequences of people's consumption habits.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper we reported on a qualitative analysis of 38 posters of the campaign Be Fair Be Vegan (BFBV) and 30 posters of the campaign Go Vegan World (GVW), which allowed us to see and interpret the stories (based on Stibbe's (2015) forms of stories) shaped by the image and language of the posters, as well as whether these stories carry a message which is beneficial with regards to seeing *nonhuman animals* as individuals and sentient living beings with their own lives.

As a result of the multimodal analysis where the language and image modes were analysed, the three main stories emerged: salience, conviction, ideology, plus elements of erasure, which all, as discussed above, serve to portray *nonhuman animals* as individuals and sentient living beings with their own lives. Both BFBV and GVW campaigns take a strong stance in portraying *nonhuman animals* as individuals and largely compare them, in language and image, to humans where both seem to be more equal than different.

The multimodal analysis in this paper reveals what language and image features can be applied in vegan and animal advocacy campaigns to forefront their ideological stance that *nonhuman animals* are victims that must not be erased as they are individual living beings. In language, based on van Leeuwen's (2008) classification, these are individualization, personalization, differentiation of social actors where social action is characterized by mental, material processes as well as the contrast of activation and passivation. In image, based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework, the features include narrative and conceptual processes where *nonhuman animals* are pictured at a horizontal angle and close distance, mainly demanding attention from the viewers. These features could show how vegan campaigns deliberately construct a relationship of equality between human and *nonhuman animals*. In further studies, vegan campaigns can be researched concerning public perception as well as the specific campaign techniques that call for action and cause more empathy for *nonhuman animals*. One more

dimension to look at is analysing vegan campaigns or any other vegan discourses with the application of systemic functional linguistics (SFL), where the emerging concept of ecogrammar may be applied as part of an ecological discourse analysis.

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