KATE MCCLELLAN

The Politics of Equivalence
(Post)Colonial Care and Transnational Animal Welfare in Jordan

Abstract: Transnational animal welfare NGOs working in Jordan enfold both animals and humans into their missions of care, making the claim that animal welfare is a form of human welfare. This approach requires making humans and animals equivalent enough to one another so that their lives, their economic prospects and their moral futures might be collectively addressed. In some cases, these 'politics of equivalence' draw on the legacies of dehumanisation and animalisation in colonial narratives of animal welfare; in others, it is a form of economisation and recalibration of life value. Tracing the central role of equivalence-making in transnational animal welfare work helps theorise how care is operationalised to be collective and efficient in global projects of aid. Collectivising human–animal care is in this case a highly effective politics of difference-making, collapsing the boundaries between human and animal life in Jordan while establishing difference between British and Jordanian life at the same time.

Keywords: animal welfare, care, equivalence, human–animal relations, Jordan

I had just spent most of the day with Yasmin, a young Jordanian animal welfare educator, and a handful of other Jordanian staff from the Humane Center for Animal Welfare (HCAW).[1] We had all gotten up early in the morning and piled into an HCAW van to make the two-hour drive from Amman to a community centre in the Jordanian city of Karak, where HCAW was hosting a workshop for a group of fifteen K-12 teachers from the local school district. Much of the day was dedicated to impassioned lectures and discussions about animal welfare in Jordan, and the teachers were encouraged to spread the message of *rifiq bil-ḥaywān* (kindness to animals) through animal clubs, hands-on activities and religious lectures at their schools. The two HCAW staff who led the workshop, Samar and Yusef, spoke plainly to the teachers in the large, dimly lit room, and drew on their experience as former teachers themselves to relate to the pedagogical needs and challenges of teaching animal welfare in Jordan. More than anything, they presented animal welfare education as an urgent ethical need, a key to preventing what they named as the further moral degradation of Jordanian society. PowerPoint slides, impromptu storytelling and graphic images of the many sick and abused animals treated by HCAW conveyed the message that animal welfare – a

moral, social and religious obligation – was currently lacking in Jordan. As the teachers murmured religious phrases under their breaths (*ya Allah, ya Rabb* – 'Oh God') at the sight of some of the injured and abused animals on the screen, Samar and Yusef told them that it was in their hands to change the hearts and minds of their students, and to raise a new generation of socially responsible and empathic Jordanians through the doctrine of animal welfare. An HCAW teacher featured in the promotional video shown at the end of the day drove this message home: 'The most important target of our work is to plant positive and religious attitudes and good ethics (*sulūk al-ijābi wa dīni wa khulūk al-karīm*) in the souls of our students by teaching them how to take care of animals.'

On the return journey back to Amman, as our van wound through the scrubby desert along Jordan's scenic King's highway, I chatted with Yasmin about the day and about HCAW's work with animals. Sarra, HCAW's director, was pointing out donkeys and horses tethered next to the tent homes of the poor Jordanian families who lived there. Some of the animals had no shelter or water, and their discomfort in the hot sun was palpable. I turned to Yasmin and asked what one of her favourite parts of the job had been in her two years of working with HCAW. I was anticipating a story of a particular animal she bonded with, or a sad tale about animal abuse – stories that I had been inundated with during my seven months of fieldwork – but Yasmin instead gestured to the passing tents in the desert and told me about the time that she, along with other HCAW staff, had distributed bags of used clothing and toys to peasants like those outside our van window. 'The children were so happy', she reminisced with a smile. 'These families have nothing and are really struggling, and it was so nice to be able to help them.'

What does it look like when humans and animals are treated together as equivalent subjects of care? In this article, I consider this question by tracing the central role that care has played, and continues to play, in transnational animal welfare in Jordan. Given the day we had spent together imparting the importance of animal welfare, it was somewhat surprising to me that Yasmin hadn't mentioned anything about animals when describing the best part of her job, instead commenting on the organisation's charity work with poor families. Yasmin is, like most of HCAW's educational staff, from a middle-class Ammani family, and had begun work at HCAW after graduating from the University of Jordan's College of Agriculture. She likes working with animals but is also attuned to the pressing humanitarian needs of her country and, as a young pious Muslim, she feels a religious obligation to attend to the poor (e.g. Mittermaier 2019) – a feeling that certainly shaped the answer she gave me. But Jordan is already awash with humanitarian NGOs, Islamic charities and development organisations, and the few animal welfare NGOs like HCAW at work in Jordan have always had to make the case for the importance of animal welfare within this context. So what was an animal welfare NGO – one that faces the daily struggle of helping an overwhelming number of animals in need with an always-insufficient budget – doing performing charity for needy humans?

Founded in 2000, HCAW, though it identifies as a Jordanian organisation, was built on the ideals and approaches of two British animal welfare organisations, Brooke and the Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad (SPANA), both of which have been working in Jordan since the 1980s.[2] As someone with a long-standing interest in animal welfare, both in my professional and personal lives, I spent much of my fieldwork volunteering at the Amman-based centres of HCAW and SPANA, becoming close to both the staff at the organisations and the resident animals, whom I cared for through mundane acts of care like cleaning cages, grooming and feeding. As I got to know the work of HCAW, SPANA and Brooke through fieldwork in Jordan and London, I came to recognise human care as a central feature of the many Euro-American animal welfare NGOs that work in the Global South, and one that is becoming even more explicit as the public face of these groups' approaches. Rather than asserting the value of caring for animals solely for the sake of animals, these groups approach their work through what I call a politics of equivalence – making equivalent the needs and desires of humans and animals so as to address both at the same time through similar ideologies of care. In this framework, it would make sense that HCAW, an animal welfare organisation, would also be giving used clothing and toys to families in need.

Care, note Jessica Barnes and Mariam Taher, 'can be a mode of action, an affective stance, or an ethical value' as well as an everyday 'set of practices that bring together bodies, subjectivities, materials, and technologies' (2019: 419). Care, in all of these senses, is central to the formalised kinds of animal welfare practice and ethics I encountered in Jordan, and the animal workers I got to know in Jordan often presented themselves as careworkers who did the physical, affective, ethical and often gendered work of caring for animals – and also humans – in need.[3] Thinking of care as both polysemic and multimodal, I examine care in this article as a political device, used by transnational animal welfare NGOs in Jordan to justify, narrate and practise specific forms of relationality among groups of humans and animals and, in the process, reproduce colonial hierarchies of humanity and animality. Though care is meant to be a force of positivity, I suggest that it often entrenches rather than uproots structural hierarchies that create the need for care in the first place. Indeed, the distribution of care in global politics of aid is, as several scholars have pointed out, highly uneven, unstable and closely linked to neoliberal approaches to the pursuit of ethical life (e.g. Muehlebach 2012). In Jordan – a country that has a high number of NGOs and is one of the world's top recipients of USAID funds – caring for and being cared for have the additional characteristics of being potent personal and group identifiers; for many Jordanians, care is a highly visible and contentious idiom through which to navigate what it means to live a good life (cf. Sukarieh 2016).

In this article, I point to the ways in which transnational animal care connects human and animal subjects together through a politics of equivalence. For groups like HCAW, SPANA and Brooke, approaching animal welfare as an enterprise

that cares for both animals and humans requires the work of making those subjects equivalent to one another – through their lives, their value and their prospects – so that care can logically bundle them as subjects similar enough to be aided together. In some cases, as I show, this equivalence-making work is linked to the legacies of dehumanisation and animalisation in colonial narratives of animal welfare. In other cases, humans and animals are made equivalent through economising discourses that frame the value of working animals' and working humans' lives as productively entwined. I use these examples to examine which forms of equivalence matter, and on what grounds – moral, affective, social and corporeal – human–animal equivalences are made. By tracing how and why equivalencies matter, I reveal how care works, or is meant to work, *collectively* in global projects of aid, even if those collectives contain different registers of life.

Growing scholarship on the connections between dehumanisation, animalisation and racialisation reveal how human–animal relations have been and continue to be used in the ordering of life. Anthropologists have become increasingly interested in understanding how animals are used politically to create, articulate and subvert forms of (in)humanity that give power to some and disenfranchise others. Sophie Chao's work on the polysemic symbolism of the monkey in West Papuan struggles for justice, for instance, argues that monkeys 'speak in different ways to the subhuman positioning of Papuans in violent histories of race construction, as well as to the plurality of the "human" category as a sociopolitical construct' (2021: 276); and Iván Sandoval-Cervantes' (2016) ethnography of human–dog relations in Mexico reveals what he calls the 'graduated humanness' that structures how different groups of animals and humans are formed in relation to their shifting 'levels' of humanness. Here, animals are alternatively human and not-human, and humans are alternatively animal and not-animal, depending on shifts in social context (see also Braverman 2016; Brown 2019). In the eyes of animal welfare groups at work in Jordan, I show, the equivalences made between human and animal life rest on assumptions about shared human–animal experiences of body, affect, being and value.

Finally, thinking through the politics of equivalence in animal welfare work has implications for anthropological studies of human–animal care. Caring for non-humans creates multiple kinds of publics (Chua 2018; Hartigan 2015) as much as it structures intimate moments of human–animal becoming (e.g. Dave 2014; Maurstad et al 2013). Multispecies care can be about affinity and love just as much about violence, inequality and death – and often involves both at the same time (Bocci 2017; Govindrajan 2018; Parreñas 2018; Singh and Dave 2015; Svendsen et al 2018; van Dooren 2014). Transnational animal welfare is indeed a form of multispecies care in all of these senses: it wraps together multiple forms of life by stressing interconnection and relationality, and often creates unevenness and injustice in doing so. But the ethnography of human–animal care in Jordan diverges from most accounts of multispecies care because it involves not just the relationship between Jordanian humans and animals, or between British humans

and Jordanian animals, but rather a deliberately differential relationship between transnational animal groups on the one hand and human and animal subjects of care in Jordan on the other. Collectivising human–animal care is, at least in this case, a highly effective politics of difference-making, collapsing the boundaries between human and animal life in Jordan while establishing difference between British and Jordanian life at the same time.

The Progress of a Nation: Colonial Legacies of Animal Welfare

One Friday in October 2014, a few weeks before the workshop I attended in Karak, I spent the majority of the morning and afternoon helping Sarra, HCAW's director, clean out and organise a storage closet at the Center, where years of educational materials and children's art projects on animal welfare had been piling up. HCAW's Center – a sprawling building with veterinary exam rooms, classrooms, and outdoor and indoor enclosures that host dogs, cats, horses, donkeys and a range of birds and other smaller animals – is located in a semi-rural area just south of Amman, near the main road to Queen Alia Airport (Figure 1).

   Other than the constant sound of barking and other animal noises, the Center, closed on Fridays, was relatively quiet that day, devoid of the myriad visitors

FIGURE 1. Resident dogs play in the fenced area outside Amman's Humane Center for Animal Welfare. Two dogs pictured have amputated legs due to bullet wounds. (Photo by Author)

and animals coming in and out during normal operating hours. But as Sarra and I chatted and admired the children's work, we heard a commotion coming from the front of the building. Soon after, Zaki, one of the Center's assistants, walked our way with three boys, brothers around 10–14 years old. Apparently, as he told us, the boys had scaled the fence of the Center in an attempt to retrieve the body of their young dog, who had died the day before of Parvo, a highly infectious disease. The boys were not convinced that their dog had died – or, perhaps, they were suspicious that it had been euthanised without reason – and wanted to see its body for themselves. As Sarra reprimanded them for trespassing and threatened to call the police, the youngest boy broke into tears – in part because of the scolding, and in part because of his dead dog – and Sarra put her arm around him, adopting a quieter tone.

After letting the boys go with a warning, and with assurances that the Center had done all they could to save the dog, Sarra turned to me, shaking her head and clearly exasperated. 'What is this? Is this ignorance, disobedience, or what?! . . . I'm very confused', meaning that she couldn't believe that people thought it was okay to just climb the fence and trespass onto the Center's property. This was not the first time that trespassing had occurred, and HCAW staff had to be on the lookout for detractors who sometimes snuck over the fence to aggravate, and once even to try to poison, the resident dogs.[4] Sarra then launched into a lengthy speech about how Jordanians simply do not understand or abide by common social rules. For many years, people have been ignoring the chain to the Center's parking area, driving their cars right through, even when the Center is closed. And on most warm-weather weekends, picnickers in the nearby King of Bahrain Forest will often stop at the Center's outdoor water trough and wash their cars, despite a sign that clearly states that the trough is for animals only. Sarra also told me a story of a high school teacher she knows who was recently beaten by his students, an ultimate form of disrespect in a country where many classrooms are often run on a combination of fear and obedience. As for the young boys who trespassed, Sarra related their lack of animal welfare sensitivity (their dog died of a preventable and treatable disease, so they were deemed neglectful by bringing it to the vet too late) to their lack of social skills – that is, that they didn't even know that they shouldn't be trespassing. That is, the failings of Jordanians to act in ways deemed proper of functional civil society (following public rules, for instance) is, as Sarra sees it, deeply connected to their lack of (Euro-American) animal welfare values. As we prepared to get back to organising the storage room, she said to me with a wave of the hand: 'This is the culture.'

I later reflected on this outlook with Janna, a Jordanian woman who organises much of the educational programming at SPANA. She explained, in a mixture of English and Arabic:

> Yes, yes there is a relationship between being compassionate to animals and being compassionate to humans. We see this at school. The child who scratches the face of his friend or throws a stone at his classmate, it's not surprising that he would

hurt an animal. It's expected. We always try to tell them to try to be good to your friends, to work as one team. There shouldn't be aggression between you. This will reflect on how they will deal with each other. Mercy (*raḥma*), if it's there – We always include this in our programming! – Mercy, if it's between us as a community, then for sure it will be transferred to compassion to animals. And also there's a saying we use: Mahatma Gandhi said that 'The progress of a nation is judged by the way it deals with animals.' So, our nation will be civilised (*ruqii*) if it deals with animals a progressive way.

During fieldwork in Jordan, similar tropes of social-moral progress and civilisation surfaced frequently in my conversations with animal workers and activists in Jordan – many of whom are Jordanian themselves – who pursued their work as part of a desire to improve and develop their society (cf. Pandian 2009).[5] Though their viewpoints differed considerably, many of the animal workers I got to know connected animal welfare to wider societal issues (cf. Hart 2019) and to moral obligations of animal care in Islam (Foltz 2006; Tlili 2012). Most described Islamic standards of animal care as the corollary to the more formalised Euro-American animal welfare movement, and drew on Islamic stories, hadith and Qur'anic verse instructing kindness and care towards animals (Foltz 2006; Tlili 2012). But, in their official narratives about the work they do, groups like SPANA and Brooke foreswear the use of religion as a formal part of their messaging and for the most part ignore the long histories of animal care across the Middle East and greater Islamic world; as one of SPANA's directors in London put it to me, Islam may be a tool to use to motivate standards of animal welfare, but, citing the need to remain a secular charity in the UK, it's not 'what we do'. In this way, these NGOs can justify their work as part of a larger enterprise of education and civilisational progress that is novel and urgently needed around the world.

Approaching animal welfare as a key to social and economic progress is also an easy way to connect the care of animals to the care of humans; as a marketing tool for these groups, it fits squarely within familiar narratives of paternalistic intervention and urgent change commonly asserted by Euro-American charities (e.g. Muehlebach 2012). One of SPANA's reports produced from their London office explains: 'How animals are treated within a culture is surely a reflection of how its citizens behave towards one another. SPANA's educational objective is ambitious . . . Success means nothing less than changing society as a whole' (Albone 2013, 3). Care for animals, in this sense, is deeply implicated in care for fellow humans: by taking good care of animals, one can take good care of oneself and one's society (Figure 2). This is a care that links the fates of animals and humans together by finding ethical equivalencies between them: poor animal welfare spells poor (moral-social) human welfare, and good animal welfare means morally responsible and empathic citizens.

'Changing society as a whole' was also on the minds of early animal welfarists in nineteenth-century Europe and the USA, who considered it their duty to attune the hearts and souls of humans abroad to the moral imperatives of animal

welfare as part of a programme of
social change. Animal welfare was
not just about helping animals, but
was a project of human and soci-
etal improvement as well. Much
of this project took shape through
educational efforts that, from the
very beginning, were viewed to be
as important as the free veterinary
care that animal groups provided.
Early American animal welfarists
in fact sometimes referred to them-
selves as 'animal humanitarians'
and, drawing on tenets of Protes-
tant care and abolitionist values
(Fielder 2013), viewed their work
as promoting a 'gospel of kindness'
towards all living creatures (Davis
2016: 19). But the tenor of animal
humanitarianism also mimicked
that of imperialism: animal welfare
advocates working overseas 'often
tacitly embraced notions of the
white man's burden as part of their
call to educate and enlighten their
brethren of color abroad' (Davis

FIGURE 2. With Jordanian flags, a portrait
of King Abdullah and a toy stuffed dog,
children at SPANA Jordan's education
centre perform a skit for World Animal
Day 2014, about the importance of ani-
mal welfare for a progressed and modern
nation. (Photo by Author)

2016: 118). This was also the case for early British animal welfare advocates,
whose work in the Middle East corresponded with a range of colonial projects of
care, education, hygiene and discipline (Davis 2016; Esmeir 2012; Mikhail 2014).

Though Brooke and SPANA now work across the globe, they both got their
start in North Africa during the height of French and British control. SPANA was
founded in 1923 by a mother–daughter team, Kate and Nina Hosali, after witness-
ing what Kate described as 'a vast sea of neglected animal suffering' (Hosali 1978:
47) during a trip to Morocco. It maintains two offices in Amman: one is a veteri-
nary clinic and the other is an educational centre where visitors – usually school-
children – can interact with animals and learn about animal biology and ecology.
Brooke followed a similar path, and in the UK is the more recognisable and more
well-funded of the two. It was founded in 1934 by Dorothy Brooke, the wife of a
British Cavalry Brigade officer stationed in British-controlled Egypt in the 1930s,
initially in order to rehabilitate or euthanise old British war horses in Cairo sold
to Egyptian labourers after the First World War. Though their clinics and centres
treat a range of domestic and wild animals, both Brooke and SPANA continue
to focus their efforts on the welfare of working animals – donkeys, mules, horses

and camels – across the globe, and thus direct much of their fundraising at elite equestrians and horse owners in the UK. In Jordan, HCAW, SPANA and Brooke employ Jordanians in addition to other expat workers and volunteers, and rely at least in part on the donations and support of Jordan's large expat community.

Considering the colonial-era origins of two of these three groups (SPANA and Brooke), it is no surprise that their language and approach in Jordan is drawn at least in part from the colonial legacies of Euro-American animal welfare – and, indeed, is often interpreted as such by Jordanians critical of their work (McClellan 2019). Animal welfare ideologies remain paramount to the construction of a racialised discourse of inhuman and animalistic others, whereby the animality of racialised others is a product of both nature and inhumane (and thus inhuman) treatment of animals (Boisseron 2018; Chao 2021; Deckha 2013; Elder et al 1998; Esmeir 2012; Kim 2015; Sandoval-Cervantes 2016). Animals, then, are 'a ready resource for those seeking to elaborate racial (or other) meanings' (Kim 2015: 18), and the animal welfare movement has served and continues to serve a large role in how those racial meanings play out on the ground.[6]

Connecting the fate and progress of human and animal welfare also works to maintain the postcolonial relationship between Jordan and the UK as one predicated on cultural, social and moral difference.[7] In London, many of the British staff of SPANA and Brooke I spoke with regarded the places abroad where they worked as fundamentally different from their home society (broadly conceived as 'the West'), but fundamentally the same to one another. This is a project of difference-making similar to what Matei Candea (2016) identifies as 'frontal' vs 'lateral' comparison – a comparative framework that constructs an us/them distinction that is different in *kind* and not merely in content (see also Candea 2018). Thus, British society is of a different kind than Jordanian, Egyptian and Senegalese societies, and all the other places where SPANA and Brooke work, which in turn are different from one another only in content – what these groups typically gloss as 'culture'. Such a logic underlies the generalising work of Brooke and SPANA, which use much of the same programming, lightly translated, to address animal welfare issues across the globe.

In the summer of 2015, after a six-month period of fieldwork in Amman the year before, I visited the home offices of SPANA, located in a townhouse in London's residential Bloomsbury neighbourhood. In the front conference room, sitting next to life-size donkey costumes worn in SPANA's fundraiser marathons, I spent some time chatting with Robert, one of the organisation's directors, who had been to Jordan countless times over the decades of SPANA's involvement there. As soon as he sat down, one of the first questions he asked me was what I thought of the 'animal culture' in Jordan. Before I could think of a way to answer, he jumped in: 'There is none, right?!' He continued: 'Brits have a "fine feeling" for animals – we are animal people.' But Jordanians simply are not: in Jordan, there is not a 'culture' of animal kindness and animal welfare. And thus, with his statement, he articulated a crucial distinction between the UK and Jordan, and

one that he thought I, as a white, non-Arab American with self-declared animal welfare interests, would immediately understand: Jordanians are essentially different 'people' because they do not ascribe to the same forms of human–animal relationality that Brits ('animal people') do (McClellan 2019).

Toggling back and forth between these comparisons and contrasts (cf. Choy 2011) creates equivalence between not only groups of people (in this case, groups of Global Southerners with whom these NGOs work), but also groups of humans and animals. In other words, grouping together animals and humans as subjects of the same care regimes requires smoothing differences between them: making a donkey in need enough like a human in need to give them access to similar resources. Creating equivalence in this sense means not just animalising humans and humanising animals, but envisioning them as equivalent and mutually fated forms of life worthy of equivalent forms of care.

Maximising the Benefit: Economies of Animal Welfare

Equivalent, of course, does not mean equal: except in some cases, the animal NGOs I follow do not believe or claim that, for example, a Jordanian human is the same thing as a Jordanian donkey. Rather, humans and animals are seen as categories that possess enough similarities to be 'yoked together' – a phrase R. Radhakrishnan (2009) uses to talk about the force involved in some comparative acts – as comparable subjects of care. From the perspective of organised animal welfare, this yoking together often occurs through establishing a discourse of humans' and animals' shared life prospects. This is fairly easy to do, since animal welfare operates in large part by crafting highly anthropomorphised narratives of animals in need (Chua 2018) and by adopting tropes of humanitarian causes – for example, suffering, poverty and inhumanity – in its work. Animals in this sense are prime subjects for the kind of humanitarian care that has grown throughout the last century: they are, like children, characterised as mute innocents, undeserving of pain and suffering; their pain is, like human pain, considered to be legible and recognisable; and they elicit strong feelings of paternalistic protectionism among those who task themselves with caring for them (Ticktin 2015, 2017). The work of SPANA, Brooke and HCAW also shares with other aid projects the overwhelming mood of urgency and unending need: despite their best efforts over almost a century of work, these groups frame their work as critical now more than ever.

Yoking together humans and animals is an apt metaphor for another reason: in the discourses and practices of animal welfare groups like SPANA, Brooke and HCAW, working humans and working animals are viewed as intrinsically entangled via productivity and labour. SPANA and Brooke, organisations devoted to the welfare of working equids, have always used shared human–animal labour as a way to connect human and animal welfare. (HCAW in the past few years

has similarly been promoting a 'livelihood support' approach, particularly to poor communities around Jordan.) These groups claim the logic that if a working animal is subjected to poor welfare, it will not perform as well for its owner, thus stunting the economic progress of the human. If a horse, donkey or mule is treated well, however, the owner will be able to provide for his or her family and ultimately propel the family out of poverty. As Brooke notes in a report called 'Invisible Workers', in reference to what many staff told me was the invisible status of donkeys, horses and mules both in the communities where they work and in the larger philanthropic world:

> Working equine welfare and human welfare are inextricably intertwined. The economic and inherent values of working equine animal welfare should be seen as complementary. The welfare of working donkeys, horses and mules should also not be seen as secondary but part of a holistic and sustainable response to poverty alleviation. (Valette 2015: 40)

This claim is readily apparent in ways in which animal NGOs sell this approach to their donors and their collaborators: if one organisation can expand its scope to address multiple subjects of care – human or otherwise – then the work is logically more efficient, more effective and more demonstrably useful.

Communicating the economic benefits of human–animal care is also viewed as crucial to the work the groups do with communities, whom the NGOs assume to be easily persuaded by economic arguments for animal welfare (for a critique of this assumption, see Crist 2019). In a speech delivered for Brooke's Supporter Day in mid-2019, Alastair Stewart, a well-known British ITN newscaster and longtime supporter of Brooke, talked in explicitly economic terms to characterise the group's philosophy:

> We can help them [owners of working animals] – without being condescending or lecturing – [by] saying: '[…] Actually, [animal welfare] is going to do *you* good because it'll do the animal good.' And at the very pounding heart of everything that Brooke stands for and believes in is: If the owner of that equid looks after it, it is like in British capitalist terms not quite 'Sweating the Asset' but 'Maximising the Benefit.' Look after the creature and he or she will last longer, be more productive, and that duality of humanity and animal together will be mutually beneficial. And that is absolutely the heart of what we try to do.

The fact that animal welfare is about both 'heart' and British capitalism is not surprising. This characterisation in fact speaks to one of the main tensions of global aid, which is propelled on the one hand by abstract and limitless ideals like care, empathy and responsibility, and on the other hand by the necessarily uneven distribution of limited material resources that accompany those ideals. These two sides of aid work are in tension with one another, and these tensions show up both in the ambivalences felt by aid workers when they are forced to reconcile these two ideals and in the recipients of aid, who can easily point to the hypocrisies of the aid paradigm (McClellan 2019; Beckett 2017).

Indeed, these approaches to animal care are precisely what many Jordanians criticise Euro-American projects of animal welfare for: they not only make equivalence between the bodies, states and futures of humans and animals in the global south, but also make equivalent human and animal *value*. One example of this is particularly revealing. Featured on Brooke's website is the story of a Pakistani brick-kiln worker named Muhammad, a 'community change agent' for Brooke who exemplifies the kinds of behavioural and attitudinal changes towards animals that the organisation promotes through its programming. Next to a picture of Muhammad with his arms wrapped around his fifteen-year-old white mule, the story outlines how he reformed himself from using 'traditional myths and practices', like treating wounds with salt and oil, to proper (i.e. Western) veterinary care and handling practices. In one quote, Muhammad says: 'Brooke taught me that there is so much I can do with my own hands to make a positive change to my animal's life, such as grooming, feeding and foot cleaning.' The story is a good example of the power of development to incite in its subjects the cultivation of progress as a moral virtue (e.g. Pandian 2009). But it is Muhammad's statement about the revaluation of his animal's life as compared to his own life that makes clear the desired impact of Brooke's strategy: 'Since attending Brooke's Community Engagement meetings, I now think my animal's life is just as important as mine.'

Here, human–animal equivalence is fostered not through a radical reorientation of what life is – as a way to reimagine a different, better future – but rather a comparative recalibration of life's value. 'My animal's life is just as important as mine' is a statement that most Jordanians (and, I would guess, many Brits) would likely find insulting. In this sense, making human and animal value equivalent is essentially an economising technique similar to those discussed by Michelle Murphy's notion of the 'economization of life', which 'names the practices that differentially value and govern life in terms of their ability to foster the macro-economy of the nation-state' (2017: 5–6). Like the models of evolutionary social progress I discuss above, these recalibrations of value help to cement an ongoing process of animalisation/dehumanisation under the aegis of care by normalising a hierarchy of life in which some humans and animals in Jordan are equivalent in value, but humans in Jordan and the UK are not.

Conclusion

To HCAW, SPANA and Brooke, approaching humans and animals through the same apparatus of aid reflects an aspirational ideal of how life, whether human or animal, should be cared for. Such an approach is built on the idea that there is shared life, shared suffering, shared prospects of humans and animals – especially working animals – in places like Jordan; they are in it together as subjects in need of aid, and thus can be treated together using similar resources, programmes and

narratives. Treating care in this way produces equivalences between human and animal subjects in need, while entrenching differences between those proffering care and those (whether human or animal) meant to receive it. Making equivalence, as I suggest in this article, is a political process that is used to justify particular decisions and to elicit particular outcomes. Making equivalence is also part of the ways in which cross-cultural and, I would suggest cross-species, connections are made: in Jordan, a person in need is connected, via corporeal, ethical and ontological similarities, to an animal in need.

But connection, as Marilyn Strathern argues, 'lulls': 'the very term seems intrinsically benign, desirable . . . it gobbles up all the spaces between – a continentalizing empire, leaving nothing that is not potentially connectable to everything else' (2002: xv). Outlining some of the ways in which connections, comparisons and equivalences 'lull' is important to understanding the increasingly collectivised approaches to global aid, and to the rise of a collectivised politics of life within those aid apparatuses (cf. Ticktin 2015). What differences are elided or spaces 'gobbled up' when human–animal equivalences are made? Projects like humanitarianism, development and conservation are increasingly pursued through collaborative means that are aimed at greater efficiency, efficacy and transparency – values borne in part from the proliferation of audit cultures (Strathern 2000). Both Brooke and SPANA have adopted the 'One Welfare' paradigm that seeks to understand the connections between human and animal wellbeing and to overcome the artificial boundaries between human and animal life (Pinillos et al 2016). One Welfare, proposed in 2016, is built directly on the older 'One Health' initiative, a public health campaign initiated in 2004 as a global response to the effects of zoonotic diseases on human health (see Porter 2019); both approaches consider human and animal health and wellbeing as inseparable, and foster collaboration between agencies concerned with human and animal care. The UN's new 'humanitarian–development nexus' is another prime example of global aid programmes aimed at fostering inter-organisation collaboration and collective outcomes: the programme's work is framed as 'a shared moral imperative of preventing crises and sustainably reducing people's levels of humanitarian need, a task that requires the pursuit of collective outcomes across silos' (OCHA 2017: 3–4).

The increasing economisation and collectivisation of global aid leads to what Greg Beckett has called the 'banality of care' in which 'care is thin, spreading far and wide' and is 'without depth or intrinsic meaning' (2019: 169). I suggest here that we understand the collectivisation of aid as a difference-making project that entrenches particular versions of humanity and animality borne from Euro-American and colonial ideals of race and power. It also, as I suggest with this article, reveals the politics of equivalence that permeate these projects: how *this* and *that* are thought to be similar or different, depending on context, and, crucially, what consequences these equivalencies create. Laying bare the politics of care and equivalence also shifts anthropological focus towards the avowedly separate frameworks of multispecies care that are often encountered in the field,

in which human care and animal care are connected but not equivalent, and in which a politics of life is resolutely humanist and hierarchical (see Roberts 2017). In Jordan, where the economy has tanked, water is scarce, unemployment is at an all-time high, regional war encroaches, refugees from multiple countries have settled and the coronavirus pandemic is raging, it is indeed a difficult time for Jordanians to connect their thinking, affect and care for people to the ideologies of Euro-American animal welfare – particularly when they are asked to do so by a former colonial power. But this does not preclude a multitude of forms of human–animal connection, care and flourishing to take place on a daily basis, often outside the bounds of formalised projects of animal welfare.

KATE MCCLELLAN is Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology & Middle Eastern Cultures at Mississippi State University. Her research interests include human–animal relations, animal labour and the politics of care. Her current book project, *If We Were Animals: Human–Animal Care and Comparison in Jordan,* explores the entanglement of human and animal care in projects designed to improve human and animal lives together. Recent publications examine animal welfare education, stray dog control and wildlife infrastructures in Jordan. Kate is also working on a project on the politics of Islamic environmentalism in and beyond Jordan. Email: kmcclellan@anthro.msstate.edu. ORCID: 0000-0002-3334-5887

Notes

1. In 2014, I spent six months following the work of SPANA and HCAW as they cared for animals, taught school children, crafted social media messages, hosted workshops and public events, and led tour groups around their centres. Additional fieldwork in Jordan (2017, 2019), including at Brooke's former clinic in Petra, and in London (2015, 2017), where I conducted interviews and archival work with members of the London-based staff at SPANA and Brooke, supplemented my work in 2014. Interviews in Jordan were conducted in both Arabic and English, and sometimes a combination of both. I have changed all names to protect confidentiality.
2. HCAW's director, Sarra, worked with SPANA for several years, and modelled much of HCAW's programming and educational materials on those of SPANA, Brooke and similar organisations.

3. See Mittermaier's work (2019) on how volunteer culture – and attendant ideals of care and personal responsibility – has carved out an increasingly prominent place in Egyptian civil society.

4. Though ownership of pet dogs has risen sharply in Jordan over the past decade, dogs continue to occupy an ambivalent place in Muslim-majority countries. Poisoning, shooting and other violent behaviours towards dogs – not uncommon in Jordan – reflect the negative perceptions of dogs held by some Jordanians.

5. I distinguish between animal workers as those who work for groups such as HCAW and SPANA regardless of their feelings about animal welfare, and animal activists as those who fashion themselves as passionate practitioners of animal welfare and justice issues, regardless of their careers.

6. The use of animals as a tool of racialisation is not confined to the Global North, of course. Radhika Govindrajan's work in India, for instance, shows how animal welfare is used as a rallying cry for Hindu nationalists to claim moral superiority over Muslims (2018: 54–55).

7. Jordan was a British protectorate from 1921 to 1946, and there remains a close economic, social and political connection between the two countries.

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La politique de l'équivalence : Soins (post)coloniaux et bien-être animal transnational en Jordanie

Les ONG transnationales de protection des animaux qui travaillent en Jordanie intègrent à la fois les animaux et les humains dans leurs missions de soins, affirmant que le bien-être animal est une forme de bien-être humain. Cette approche exige de rendre les humains et les animaux suffisamment équivalents les uns aux autres pour que leurs vies, leurs perspectives économiques et leur avenir moral puissent être abordés collectivement. Dans certains cas, ces "politiques d'équivalence" s'appuient sur l'héritage de la déshumanisation et de l'animalisation dans les récits coloniaux du bien-être animal ; dans d'autres, il s'agit d'une forme d'économisation et de recalibrage de la valeur de la vie. Le fait de retracer le rôle central de l'établissement d'équivalences dans le travail transnational de protection animale permet de théoriser la manière dont les soins sont opérationnalisés pour être collectifs et efficaces dans les projets d'aide mondiaux. La collectivisation des soins humains-animaux est dans ce cas une politique très efficace de création de différences, qui abolit les frontières entre les vies humaine et animale en Jordanie tout en établissant des différences entre les vies britannique et jordanienne.

Mots-clés : bien-être animal, équivalence, Jordanie, relations homme-animal, soins