Animalizing Appalachia: A Critical Animal Studies Analysis of Early Sociological Surveys of Southern Appalachia

By Corey Lee Wrenn

Animalization is both a symbolic and structural process that renders some bodies cognitively, physically, biologically, and even evolutionarily "Other" to the effect of normalizing and rationalizing unequal modes of production and structural violence. This article argues that Appalachians, like the peoples of other colonized regions, have historically been framed as less than human, ignorant, dangerous, undeveloped, and in need of civilizing. Relatedly, the introduction of institutionalized speciesism in the region (namely, the "fur" trade and animal agriculture) facilitated an in-group/out-group binary that would permeate colonial culture and establish an economic system built on the domination of others. In light of these intersections, this article invites sociologists to consider the Appalachian case study. Specifically, it considers how sociology may have contributed to the animalization of Appalachia and set into motion a legacy of cultural and political marginalization. To initiate this area of inquiry, critical animal studies theory is applied to three foundational sociological surveys of the region to briefly analyze and ascertain how researchers' depictions may have shaped Appalachians as animalistic "Others."

Introduction

Appalachia as an economic region and cultural enclave has been well-examined with regard to its class politics (Caudill 1963; Eller 2008; Fisher 1993), and, increasingly, scholars are attending to the salience of race (Inscoe 2005; Pudup, Billings, and Waller 1995; Scott 2009) and gender (Barry 2012; Dunaway 2008; Moody 2014; Seitz 1995) in examining the persistence of hardship in America's eastern mountains. Scholars of Appalachian studies and social movements are also beginning to acknowledge these intersections of class, race, and gender in the context of environmental injustice (Fisher and Smith 2012), a rather predictable combination given that environmental degradation has been foundational to the inequality in the mountains.

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What is apparently less obvious, however, is the relationship between marginalized humans and *other* animals who cohabitate the hills. A considerable gap remains in the sociological understanding of Nonhuman Animal experiences across Appalachia's troubled history and, more broadly, the construction of animality there.[1]

This is a curious omission for a number of reasons. Most notably, the systematic killing of beavers, deers, and other animals constituted the first economic mode of production in colonial Appalachia (Nibert 2013; Swanson 2018).[2] Animal-based agriculture would soon follow as settlements became permanent, reshaping race and class politics in the region (Mann 1995). In addition to the transformational nature of animal-based economies in Appalachian social structures, the construction of animality was necessary to ideologically facilitate a widespread discrimination against Nonhuman Animals (that is, Nonhuman Animals must be understood to be lesser-than-human and "naturally" exploitable). Animality is not relegated only to nonhumans. Colonial systems characteristically construct ideological and physical systems of distinction to facilitate the disenfranchisement of less powerful *human* groups as well (Sinha and Baishya 2020). Appalachians (both Indigenous and settler) have been stereotyped as violent, wild, and barbarous (Stewart 2012; Waller 1995), suggesting that animality politics extend well beyond the subjugation of nonhuman "game" and "livestock," to the benefit of the elite.[3]

Scholars have noted that the symbolic category of "human" was manufactured (or at least fine-tuned) with the spread of colonialism and its domination of territories, societies, and natural spaces (A. Ko 2019). Prior to this, the boundary between humans and other animals was far more permeable (Creager and Jordan 2002), not solidifying until colonial conquest enforced its project of "civilization," which justified the domination of "wild" places such as that associated with Africa (Suzuki 2017), Asia, Latin America (Camphora 2021; Nibert 2013), and Ireland (Wrenn 2021). Subsequently, it can be argued that human dominance is not natural but rather manufactured and sustained through the oppression of other animals. This line of reasoning is broadly advanced by the field of critical animal studies, a multidisciplinary analysis of human relations with other animals that interrogates anthropocentrism and human supremacy. Critical animal studies often acknowledges economic and political incentives to maintain speciesism and characteristically identifies how speciesism entangles with other systems of inequality such as racism, sexism, and classism. Recent research on how this transpires in colonial spaces examines these material and ideological intersections (Montford and Taylor 2020), aspiring to "historicize and understand multi/inter/transspecies encounters" and bring to light the many "entanglements of race and species in colonial and neocolonial frameworks" (Sinha and

Baishya 2020, 13). While it may be contentious to describe Appalachia as a postcolonial region, it nonetheless remains the case that the experiences of mountain people are greatly shaped by the experiences of and ideas about mountain animals.

This article applies critical animal studies to interrogate the artificial border constructed between humans and other animals that has manifested in Appalachia, but in order to initiate such an ambitious intersectional investigation, it begins with an exploratory analysis of early sociological surveys of the region that laid the foundations of Appalachian studies in the early 1900s, at the turn of the twentieth century. In doing so, I intentionally trouble colonial-constructed boundaries that have been erected between "nature" and "civilization" in the discourse. I also highlight the role of social science in establishing disciplinary norms, socializing researchers both present and future, and reifying public stereotypes and prejudices. Sociology itself is a discipline that is only now beginning to reckon with its role as accomplice in colonial institutions and ideologies (Go 2013; Steinmetz 2013). This article argues that its contribution to the animalization of Appalachia is an associated legacy that remains unacknowledged. To accomplish this, I begin with a brief overview of animalization in Appalachia, followed by a spotlight on three foundational sociological surveys (Vincent 1898; Campbell 1921; Sherman and Henry 1933) published at the turn of the twentieth century.

Subduing the "Savages" in Ireland, Scotland, and Appalachia

Appalachia is a wide-reaching, diverse, and complex region that resists simplistic reductions and grand narratives, but there are some core themes that frame critical animal analysis. Serving as the frontier of the "civilized" American colonies, the Appalachian Mountains separated the productive piedmont regions of the eastern United States from the great untapped and largely unknown expanses of wilderness that lay beyond them. As such, the *symbolic* boundary erected between "human" and "animal" in Appalachia must be understood in the context of *physical* geographical borders. Borderlands, both physical and ideological, have historically invited the elite deployment of animalization as a strategy for instilling control, normalizing a hierarchical order, and facilitating exploitation (Nibert 2013). Along with Nonhuman Animals, I suggest that Indigenous peoples, poor whites, women, and African Americans have been subject to animalization via the cultural constructions of the elite. This animalization happens in two ways. First, these groups are displaced and marginalized to make way for animal-based colonizer economies, and this economic shift is perpetuated with the instillation of human supremacist ideologies of domination. Second, the marginalized groups themselves are animalized according to these new

ideologies. Animalization is not accidental; it is a powerful mechanism of colonial political-economic domination.

Appalachia was colonized by Europeans in earnest in the early- and mid-1700s, mostly by English, Irish, and Scottish emigrants who were seeking to eke out a living in a foreign land, in many cases, out of desperation created from land clearances and colonial repression. To make way for these new homesteaders, Indigenous communities of humans, and other animals were cleared by violent means. The skirmishes between these groups became so frequent that a series of forts were constructed across eighteenth-century Appalachia. This was not only to protect the white settlers but also to protect and regularize the booming "fur" trade. Native Americans were key providers of "furs." They were also thought useful as hindrances to competing colonial efforts, like that of France in the northern territories and Spain in the Deep South (Dunaway 1994). This allegiance would not last, and Indigenous communities faced forced land clearances, cultural (and sometimes literal) genocide, and intertribal warfare strategically provoked by colonizers to control the region and rebuff competitors.

Meanwhile, entire species of Nonhuman Animals were also obliterated from the mountains, if not from the "fur" trade, then from extermination practices designed to protect and grow animal agriculture (D. E. Davis 2003). As one turn-of-the-twentieth century historian described of a border county in Virginia: "Alleghany was for many decades the scene of treacherous outrages at the hands of the savage [omitted word], not to mention the milder dangers of wild animals to which the border settlers were continually subjected" (McAllister 1902, 184). This choice of narrative is important. The lexical juxtaposition of marginalized humans and other animals is not accidental, but rather a strategic maneuver used to highlight the humanity of the dominant class and rationalize the subjugation of all others (Kheel 2008; A. Ko 2019). Nonhuman Animals, non-whites, and nature more broadly were symbolically conflated as a threat to European colonial civilization: a threat that must be disciplined and controlled.

This project of animalization had already begun in the British Isles with the colonization of Ireland and the subjugation of Scotland. There, colonial speciesism, classism, and racism also operated concurrently. Both the Scots and the Irish were portrayed as barbaric savages in the state's rationalization of land clearances, economic exploitation of native populations, and mass deportation. This was made possible not only through animalized depictions of colonial subjects (Wrenn 2021; Curtis 1971), but also through the cementing of their subjugation through the intensification of animal agriculture in Ireland and Scotland. The animalization of cows, sheeps, pigs, and other "livestock" in the manufacture of "meat," "dairy," "wool," and other products of exploitation, as well as the animalization of free-living

animals like wolves, who were deemed competition or nuisances, created an ideological framework that could be applied across species to include humans as well. The colonial system, of course, followed the emigrants. As an extension of capitalism, colonialism required continuous expansion to attain more raw resources and new markets to consume the fruits of this growth (Nibert 2013). As resources were depleted in Europe, colonizers expanded their empires across the globe to sustain growth and wealth attainment, spreading nonhuman animal agriculture and ideologies of animalization in the process.

Constructing Race, Class, and Species

Colonization, critical animal studies argues, is facilitated by the construction of animality, but this happens in tandem with the construction of race and ethnicity. Zelinger (2019), for instance, has suggested that domestication and "livestock" breeding fed the eugenicist imagination. This co-construction was also made possible by the popularity of social Darwinism in the early twentieth century; the same species identification, categorization, and imagination for "betterment" that had been realized for nonhumans were applied to racial and ethnic human groups. Appalachians were not exempted from this process (Shapiro 1978). Racialized Others are, like Nonhuman Animals, usually distinguished by purported physical, biological, cognitive, and evolutionary characteristics, as well as a perceived uncivilized, close-to-nature type of lifestyle. The use of animalization to subjugate is well-known in the case of African Americans (Johnson 2018), but charges of "savagery" are endemic to all manner of racial and ethnic constructions, including Indigenous and poor white Appalachians. Poor whites were saddled with additional (usually ableist) stereotypes of interbreeding. Anthropologists have noted that while evidence does not support the stereotype, it has been effective in rationalizing inequality (Tincher 1980). For the purposes of this article, one can also imagine how in-breeding stereotypes mark lesser-than-human status physically by emphasizing bodily and dental disfigurement. Inbreeding would also indicate an animal-like failure to regulate sexual behaviors.

In addition to the association between racialized humans and other animals, ethnocentric stereotypes about the particular cruel treatment of other animals further supports their other-than-human status (Kim 2015). Several critical animal studies scholars have identified a number of cases in which the dominant class has operationalized concerns about animal welfare to police marginalized human groups, such as immigrants, lower classes, people of color, and colonial subjects (Dalziell and Wadiwel 2017; J. M. Davis 2016; Unti 2002). The violent or neglectful treatment of other animals could animalize Appalachians by emphasizing its necessity given the

perceived harsh wilderness living of mountain people or by emphasizing their purported lack of civilization and self-restraint. Ko has also theorized that the cultural juxtaposition of backwoods whites with taxidermized animals (a persistent media trope) cues a predilection for moral depravity (A. Ko 2019). The ritualized killing of other animals was also a heavy feature in the *Foxfire* series, a collection of oral history and Appalachian do-it-yourself that not only recorded endangered traditions in a modernizing society, but helped to create the mountain mystique. Of course, the wide variety of species that were incorporated into human diets also flagged Appalachians as uncivilized and Other. "Roadkill" (animals struck and killed by motor vehicles) is perhaps the most infamous on the menu, rendering those who eat it no higher than possums, raccoons, or other scavengers. By way of another example, many cultural depictions of Appalachia invite the audience to join protagonists (outsiders coded as civilized and white) as they go "into the jungle" to observe (or avoid) dangerous, primitive beings in their animal-like, subhuman state. The 1972 horror film *Deliverance* is probably the most famous in this regard, with the title itself indicating the precarity of entering into the dangerous unknown of Appalachia. A case can thus be made that poor whites, like their counterparts of color, have been racialized in their supposed genetic distinction and unique physical traits (McCarroll 2018). Although popular depictions of Appalachian whites do interrogate skin tone (that is, depicting Appalachian people covered in dirt and mud, coal-faced, or as "rednecks"), racialization, critical animal studies has argued, fundamentally plays on ideas about sub-humanity. Animalization (and, consequently, racialization) informs power structures.

Vegan sociologists have identified economic structural influences behind these social divisions. Race, class, and species (along with a variety of other categories, for that matter) provide important rationales for economic exploitation and environmental inequalities (Fitzgerald and Pellow 2014; Nibert 2002). Furthermore, these social divisions have been important for discouraging solidarity and resistance. Animality is openly accepted as a negative social category, thus offering a "*tacit acceptance* of *the hierarchical racial system and white supremacy in general*" according to Syl Ko (2017; emphasis in original). "The human-animal divide is the ideological bedrock underlying the framework of white supremacy," she furthers, whereby "the negative notion of 'the animal' is the anchor of this system" (S. Ko 2017, 45). Although compelling arguments have been made in the field of Appalachian studies to acknowledge the intersectionality of class and race (Inscoe 2005; Smith 2004), this central role of animality remains unexamined.

Henry Shapiro (1978) has noted that early imaginings of Appalachia in the late nineteenth century mirrored the colonial exoticism that had

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been applied to subjugated people in Eurasia, Asia, and Africa. Animalization, however, is also at play here. Rather than enter the wilderness by boat, caravan, or safari, journalists visited Appalachia via train to document the supposed curious primitive peoples for middle-class readership. Appalachians were frequently depicted in juxtaposition with Nonhuman Animals such as dogs dozing on porches, bloodhounds and coonhounds on the trail, and stubborn or lazy mules. Invariably, these other animals serve as social commentary on the character of their human companions. The mountains and woodlands, too, were a key part of their character, such that Appalachians were identified as part of the flora and fauna, a spectacle to be sought out by curious tourists and captured in photography or literary accounts for the "civilized" audiences at home. That so many of these sketches, articles, and books emerged from the prevailing naturalism trend in American literature and journalism underscores the other-than-human categorization of Appalachian peoples. Otherization was further facilitated by the denominational religious work in the region, where framing Appalachians as both different and in need facilitated various missions. Likewise, the academic "discovery" of Appalachia (with interests in both aiding Appalachia and bolstering researchers' careers and institutions) helped to institutionalize "Appalachia" as a distinct region (Shapiro 1978). Although Shapiro emphasizes the alignment of this "discovering" with similar zoological projects of the era, he does not go so far as to sufficiently unpack the role of animalization in Otherizing Appalachia. Through the definition of Appalachia by its geography, discussing it in terms of discovery, and homogenizing its people, Appalachian people became a distinct *species*.

An Early Sociology of Appalachia

The documentation of animalization as a means of culturally marginalizing Appalachian people is a large undertaking and thus necessitates some strategic sampling. I have chosen to open this investigation with a look at the sociological discipline itself, particularly as it was being developed at the turn of the twentieth century. This work is premised on critical animal studies' attention to the role that science has played in constructing and legitimizing categories of difference, particularly that related to species distinctions, evolutionarily ideas about group inferiority and superiority, and the goal of social development. Using the lens of critical animal studies, this article explores how sociological research has traditionally animalized its Appalachian subjects and used this animalization as an explanation or rationale for inequality. This work relies on an exploratory and purposive discourse analysis of early sociological research to initiate this line of inquiry. Sociological surveys are important cultural influencers given their

scientific authority and presumed objectivity. Furthermore, they were often used in government efforts to manage Appalachia. For instance, *Hollow Folk* (Sherman and Henry 1933) had considerable cultural reach, having been spotlighted in the *New York Times* in 1933 (*New York Times* 1933). It was also pivotal to the displacement of locals in the construction of Shenandoah National Park in western Virginia, as it provided scientific support for state intervention and forced removal (Horning 2001).

The studies included in this study were identified by Walls and Billings (1977) as foundational sociological surveys in the Appalachian region. I have selected three, all of which were published before the mid-1960s: Vincent's "A Retarded Frontier" (1898), published in the *American Journal of Sociology*; Campbell's *Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (1921); and Sherman and Henry's *Hollow Folk* (1933). The time frame is designed to encapsulate the first official social scientific studies. Sociology and anthropology are both disciplines that formed in the late nineteenth century, conveniently coinciding with the industrialization and opening up of Appalachia. Future examination of surveys conducted after the 1960s might offer a useful contrast in presentation, as a more critical Appalachian studies had by that time crystallized, but these have been excluded due to limited space. Informed by the civil rights advancements of the 1960s and early 1970s and Appalachian social justice efforts, studies of Appalachia today are more interested in humanizing mountain people. Analyses from the early 1900s, at the turn of the twentieth century, would be far less likely to pass peer review, but they illuminate sociology's earlier, almost anthropological cultural-comparative approach that emphasized development and often legitimized colonialism. This juncture of heightened social construction, hardening social hierarchies, and scientific intervention is well-suited for a critical animal analysis. Appalachia—much as it is still understood today—was being "discovered" and defined alongside the rise of social science in Progressive Era America (Shapiro 1978). The Otherization of Appalachian peoples began with competitive Church efforts that needed to create a rationale for missionary work, but later social science would emphasize the lack of community created by the supposed isolation of mountain life. Just as wild animals who are often pitted as untamed, survival-motivated, remotely located, irrational, and sometimes dangerous, researchers hoped to document Appalachian culture to advance plans for creating community. This could be done by encouraging autonomy via psychological, social, and economic skills within Appalachia or otherwise by removing them to join the "legitimate" community of the "outside," "civilized" world (often as cheap labor in mill towns). The legacy of this early work still informs the idea of Appalachia today.

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Animalization and the Othering of Appalachians transpires in a variety of cultural channels beyond scientific publications, of course. Additional research into popular media (including contemporary productions) will likely add further evidence to the process. *Deliverance* (Boorman 1972), *Wrong Turn* (Schmidt 2003), *The Blair Witch Project* (Myrick 1999), and other horror films set in Appalachia depict its inhabitants as animal-like. Popular television shows like *The Beverly Hillbillies* and *The Andy Griffith Show* could offer further evidence. Likewise, fruitful data might be gleaned from comics and periodicals, which would have been more influential in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For instance, Curtis (1971) has documented the animalization of Irish immigrants (many of whom would settle in Appalachia) in American magazines like *Harper's Weekly*. The *Li'l Abner* comic set in the town of "Dogpatch" would also provide additional evidence. Beyond these sources, further investigation into art, documentaries, novels, or photography featuring mountain people could reveal further references to Appalachian animality. Indeed, media analysis is a core methodology in critical animal studies used to interrogate "systems of power and domination between humans and other species" (Merskin 2015, 17). Representations of Nonhuman Animals in media often "function as boundary objects, as the limit test, between what humans are and are not," and this species line is "continuously drawn and redrawn to maintain difference" (Merskin 2015, 17). The possibilities are many, but because this study, in part, aims to interrogate the anthropocentrism of Appalachian studies, at least as it may have been influenced by early sociological work, a historical analysis of social scientific surveys offers an apt starting point.

A "Retarded" Frontier

I begin this analysis with Vincent's (1898) brief account of the Southern Appalachians in a major American sociological journal. While patronizing, this study is a prime example of the "local color" idea of Appalachia (Shapiro 1978), and, subsequently, it is not overtly diminishing. At first brush, it does not seem to be especially interested in animalizing Appalachian people, but the incessant references to the natural habitat of the residents and their high rates of reproduction give the impression that Vincent could be a game warden reporting on wildlife patterns. Here, families "in which ten children have been born" live in homes "built of hewn oak logs" and sealed with mud (Vincent 1898, 5). They might be beavers or possums. Indeed, he seamlessly shifts from descriptions of mountain geography into descriptions of the evolutionary makeup of the population, both of which are noted to be "singularly free" from "foreign elements" (Vincent 1898, 4). This human "retardedness" is framed as sociologically interesting

and worth preserving: "Each year, with the modernizing of the region, the conditions become less primitive and simple" (Vincent 1898, 9–10). This interpretation is telling, as sociology as a discipline emerged to measure the effects of modernization on society and, for many scholars, to also ameliorate many social inequalities (Ashley and Orenstein 2004). It is unusual that "primitive" and "simple" conditions are thought worthy of protection. Although the author's recommendation is not to interfere with or remove the residents, the preservation rhetoric does suggest, on some level, the researcher's presumption of Appalachian animal-like Otherness.

The Highlanders

Funded by the Russell Sage Foundation, John Campbell's *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (1921) is based on his late nineteenth-century work in the region as an educator. Campbell was a great proponent of culturally appropriate uplift in the region, and his work highlights the supposed simple, quaint life of Appalachia. Campbell, who spent most of his professional career working in Appalachia and advocating on its behalf, was much more careful to describe residents in detail, depicting individuality and complex lives. His research, he suggested, hoped to "obtain sympathetic understanding of the people and their background" to sensitively and cooperatively facilitate development that "does not divorce the so-called cultural from the necessary economic life of the neighborhood" (Campbell 1921, 7). Indeed, Campbell is critical of prevailing generalizations of the region, giving great attention to its many variations in geography and culture.[4]

Campbell also makes an effort to humanize Native Americans and is *somewhat* sensitive to why hostilities were aroused in response to colonial expansions. Despite this attentiveness, Campbell himself tends to romanticize mountaineer heroism and contemporary Appalachian life in a way that is likewise stereotypical.[5] Nonhuman Animals surface in this account primarily as commodities in economic trade with reference to "fur" acquisition, hunting, farming animals, and driving "livestock" and "pack-horses." This emphasis on "wilderness" as a menace to be conquered (described in tandem with Indigenous hostilities that complicated this expansion) does reference the animalization of the region, if only to uplift white Appalachians as more civilized (and human) by comparison. As is also the case in *Hollow Folk* and to a lesser extent in "A Retarded Frontier," the relationship between settlers and their "livestock" is highlighted. Campbell regularly describes the colonization process as taking place through the importation of sheeps, horses, cows, pigs, and other exploited animals. If, as critical animal studies proposes, humanity is defined relationally by a superiority to other animals, Appalachians would be expected to demonstrate their humanity by enacting their dominance and incorporating speciesist

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relations into their communities. Civilization did not just take place by forcing treaties on Native Americans to privatize land, but by clearing that land and populating it with farmed animals via settler-constructed roads that replaced paths forged by Native Americans and other animals. These "livestock drives" became a major industry by the nineteenth century, fueling further settlement and infrastructure (Yarnell 1998). Thousands upon thousands of Nonhuman Animals were marched across the mountains each year. For Campbell's highlanders, the full potential of their reliance on Nonhuman Animals had not yet been realized. Certain forms of speciesist agriculture such as the exploitation of goats, sheeps for hair, bees, and cows for cooperative dairying, he advises, will be key to the region's development (Campbell 1921).

As Campbell (1921) recognizes, a positive survey of Appalachia would need to demonstrate the biological adequacy—even supremacy—of its human population. This may have been particularly necessary at the time given the popularity of social Darwinism, an ideology identified by critical animal studies scholars as a potent rationale for inequality. Nibert (2015) notes its application to "people who were poor and struggling to survive—conditions that were, in fact, a result of the selfishness and malevolent use of power by leading capitalists" in order to mark them as "biologically deficient" and "akin to the 'lowly' other animals" (77). "The ideological oppression of devalued humans and other animals," he continues, "thus became deeply intertwined" (Nibert 2015, 77). In chapter 4, Campbell (1921) appears to wrangle with the preeminence of social Darwinism and its stigmatizing effect by taking on the onerous task of tracing and uplifting the ancestry of Appalachian whites. Early documents, the genealogy of early names, folk songs, and oral history offer some clues, but Campbell emphasizes the ultimate impossibility of distinguishing the "racial" origin of settlers from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Germany, and so on. He does not trace the ancestry of non-white Appalachians, namely, Indigenous or Black people. Although his attempt to explore the lineage of Appalachian whites is piecemeal and strained, it serves to offer them some semblance of status, personhood, and humanity by placing them in the context of a larger European civilization. These pioneer qualities, he proclaims, can be identified in contemporary Appalachians, noting that they are "tall, lean, clear-eyed, self-reliant, never taken by surprise, and of great endurance" (Campbell 1921, 72). He does not skirt the more rustic and animalistic depictions of poor Appalachian life but is careful to clarify that economic inequality and class variations are at work here; not all Appalachians live in such destitute conditions. That said, in his chapter on living conditions and health, Campbell's accounts are more in line with those of Vincent (1898) and Sherman and Henry (1933). For Campbell, however, the intention was

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to encourage philanthropic and governmental support to improve quality of life. His sociology was an emancipatory one.

Nonhuman Animals also feature in Campbell's (1921) analysis of the Appalachian diet. This might be predicted given prevailing social Darwinist ideas about vegetarianism, omnivorism, and evolutionary development. Irish, Indian, and other colonized cultures, for instance, have been pegged as weaker, stunted, and in need of colonial control because of their traditionally plant-based consumption (Adams 2015). Although animal products are consumed in Appalachia, Campbell indicates that these are eaten minimally given cultural aversions, the geographical limitations for keeping "livestock," or the greater economic utility in keeping domesticates alive for other purposes. As an example of the latter point, he explains: "Eggs are comparatively cheap but do not form so great a factor in the diet as they should" (Campbell 1921, 199). He otherwise celebrates a wide variety of garden-grown fruits and vegetables as well as foraged plants, fruits, nuts, syrups, and berries as staples of the diet. He observes children as "insufficiently nourished," however, while he criticizes food preparation as inadequate, leading to parasites (Campbell 1921, 217). This is only compounded by the lack of medical services in the region and the predominance of poorly trained, overly expensive, or even exploitative physicians. To Campbell (1921), the people of Appalachia are practical, independent, and survival-oriented. If there is any animalism to be observed in this culture, it results from predatory outside practices or the failings of the government in offering adequate provisions and its emphasis on immediate relief over preventative, structural change.

Campbell's (1921) handling of stereotyped Appalachian violence is also tactful, particularly as Nonhuman Animals are often stereotyped as violent as a means of justifying their oppression (Johansson et al. 2012). He likely emphasizes white Appalachian's fierce independence as a means of humanizing them. This individualism argument makes for a strained explanation when surveying Appalachian people's purported characteristic disregard for the law (particularly with moonshining, feuding, and homicide). To address this, Campbell (1921) points to the "influence of the Negro [homicide] rate," which he claims is "disproportionately high," skewing the data about violence in the region (115). The author makes no mention, tellingly, of rampant lynching or racial bias in policing and prosecution. White Appalachians, he continues, engage in antisocial behavior due to their honorable heritage of individualism, while Blacks and other groups living in predominantly urban areas supposedly do so out of their cultural difficulty with assimilating into an industrialized society. Campbell's (1921) attention to specifically countering stereotypes of white Appalachians seems to support the critical animal studies observation that humanity is not only

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delineated by its distinction from Nonhuman Animals but also by its distinction from nonwhite racial groups (S. Ko 2017; A. Ko 2019). It further suggests that, while levied against all races—whites included—people of color, at least in the United States, are more vulnerable to processes of animalization.

It is clear that Campbell (1921) is also treating white *men* as the universal Appalachian character. His chapter on home life, for instance, paints a rather animalistic image of women. Although he does acknowledge that women do work in farms, fields, and schoolhouses, he presents women as primarily dependent upon men. Their seemingly innate affiliation for nature and other animals is presented as cause for their expectation to cook, forage, and tend to "livestock." Indeed, selling foraged roots and herbs as well as cows' milk and butter is identified as one of the few means of independent income for women. The objectification of women and girls in the mountain culture he depicts is not especially critiqued; women are largely treated as property to be bartered among men (fathers, brothers, and suitors), sometimes in exchange for a dowry of "livestock." Once bound to a man, she was not to interact with other men, although "illegitimacy" was apparently commonplace. Here again, women, but not men, are animalized for this uncivilized behavior. As is the case with race, gender, too, is defined and maintained through processes of animalization. The work of vegan feminist Carol Adams (2015), for instance, has examined the many ways in which women are animalized to naturalize patriarchal oppression. Subsequently, Campbell's effort to construct Appalachian humanity seems to hinge on marginalizing women's experiences. Campbell (1921) explains extramarital sex and pregnancy as being a result of "the nature of animalism" in women and "may be traced in part to the lack of privacy in the home, early acquaintance with the sex relation, and a promiscuous hospitality" (32). Given the high birth rates in the region, he is also compelled to comment on lack of family planning—again, women are identified as responsible.

"Hollow" Folk

The development discourse, as a postcolonial critical animal studies perspective might predict, offers another framework for differentiating Appalachians as somehow less than fully human. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, American social reforms concentrated on improving public health and, as a consequence, this entailed rationalizing animal-based agriculture and foodways (Robichaud 2019). Human relations with other animals, in other words, were managed by local, state, and federal bodies of power with the aim of social betterment. Shapiro (1978) notes that, after the 1910s, this discourse also supported the notion that, if the environment was believed to have a degrading impact on Appalachians,

then removing them from that environment was justifiable. Increased infrastructure not only facilitated greater "civilization" of the region, but it also invited intensified industrial exploitation. The environment itself was easier to access and exploit, but the export of Appalachians to the booming cotton industry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was also facilitated. Sherman and Henry's (1933) *Hollow Folk*, with its ulterior motive of rationalizing the government's plan to forcibly remove locals from the newly designated Shenandoah National Park, is one of the more conniving "scientific" accounts of mountain culture. The foreword, written by anthropologist Fay-Cooper Cole, suggests that Appalachian people exist as a sort of window back into time, a time when humans were still in a state of evolution (or a window into the future if not kept in check). *Hollow Folk*, he promises, offers a "wealth of material for scientists and laymen who are interested in the growth and decline of human culture" (Sherman and Henry 1933, v). The human supremacist element of species construction certainly relates here. Critical animal studies has suggested that species differentiation invariably entails a hierarchy of evolutionary development and moral worth (S. Ko 2017; A. Ko 2019; Nibert 2015). Appalachians in the *Hollow Folk* study, having been differentiated from the more "developed" American population, are presented as degenerate and in need of subjugation.

Just as Nonhuman Animals are thought to be manipulated, controlled, and bettered by human intervention, a logic of superiority and entitlement prevails in Sherman and Harry's (1933) study, which includes a comparative analysis of several hollow communities in the Shenandoah Mountains of Virginia. Indeed, they recount their cavalcade traversing treacherous mountain roads to reach the hollows in a narrative that is reminiscent of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902). Their first interactions with the native population are described as if the residents were wild animals who had to be coaxed out of hiding with treats of tobacco. The communities are introduced as being "at the lowest level of social development" and only just able to "keep company with the human race on its long journey from primitive ways of living to a modern social order" (Sherman and Henry 1933, 5). The authors offer Appalachia's inadequate exploitation of other animals as one example of this failure to modernize, a problem on par with illiteracy: "No one in the Hollow proper can read or write. There are no cattle or poultry in the Hollow proper. One family owns a pig and another [a] horse" (Sherman and Henry 1933, 5). Some selling of calves, cows' milk, butter, eggs, and bees' honey did offer some income. Recall that critical animal studies scholars have theorized that humanity, along colonial logic, is often defined and asserted through the domination of other animals. In so quickly noting the stuntedness of their sample with regard to nonhuman animal "husbandry," the researchers are able to flag them as subhuman,

particularly so when juxtaposed with their illiteracy. The researchers also highlight the lack of other civilizing elements, such as formal family ties, community gathering spaces, policing, and government. Across sample sites, the researchers measure state of advancement by regular ownership of Nonhuman Animals, clearer clan structures, and organized worship. One of the more "advanced" sample sites in this study is delineated by a more sophisticated type of agriculture, a post office, and notably, the fact that "most families have pigs, chickens, cows, and horses" (Sherman and Henry 1933, 6). In other words, the humanity of Appalachian people is not only defined by their incorporation of markers of civilization, but civilization itself is defined by its oppression of other animals.

The authors further delineate folks living in the most advanced sample site by their increased physical cleanliness and sanitation, as well as a better ability to "express their thoughts in more meaningful language" (Sherman and Henry 1933, 8). Intelligence tests on children living in the least advanced site find them barely able to understand form, distance, and space. When asked to copy basic shapes, the researchers find that mountain children perform worse than children in institutions for the intellectually disabled. With rationality serving as one of the main characteristics that distinguish humans from other animals, the considerable emphasis on Appalachian intellectual underdevelopment easily marks them as less than human.

Sherman and Henry (1933) are nothing if not thorough in their inclusion of all types of dehumanizing qualities they claim to have discovered. The degree of animality ascribed to the hollow folk is also apparent in a photo comparison between a more advanced community (clean, paved, and fence-lined) and the least advanced community (which looks no more developed than a wildlife trail). Children of all the sampled hollows were in want of clothes; the rags that covered them were "inadequate to protect them from the winter weather" (Sherman and Henry 1933, 102). They wander inside and out "with no particular compunction," whether day or night, as they "have been trained from infancy to go without light" (Sherman and Henry 1933, 83). Mothers are noted as "hardly able to grasp the simplest explanations of household hygiene" (Sherman and Henry 1933, 112). Childbirth is said to take place in the home without a physician, where a child "may come into the world in the presence of all its mildly interested brothers and sisters sprawling about the bed of rags where the mother reclines" (Sherman and Henry 1933, 18). Fathers, we are assured, take no interest. Sherman and Henry might as well be describing the birth of bear cubs.

Sexual relations, for that matter, are said to frequently take place out of wedlock, with multiple partners, and even incestuously. Birth control is not understood or trusted: "Dumbly, without reason or protest, these women accept motherhood" (Sherman and Henry 1933, 25). Birth is routine,

prolific, and said to cause these primitive women less pain than for more cultured (seemingly human) women outside of the mountains. Sherman and Henry (1933) describe sex as devoid of higher emotional awareness (it is loveless), "atavistic" (160), and, lacking moral guidance, steered by "natural impulses" (161). Bodily functions are not hidden; children relieve themselves unabashedly in front of others, families share beds, and children know about and dabble in sexual practices from a very early age. In the less cultured hollows, infants are left to wallow in urine-soaked and filth-covered tatters. Even the concept of brushing one's teeth is said to be unknown by the sample communities. These behaviors might all be interpreted as animalistic and well below the acceptable standards of civilized human society.

Sherman and Henry (1933) identified lawlessness as a reason for interference from the outside. "For a century the hollow folk have lived almost without contact with law or government. But soon the strong arm of the federal government will fall up on them," Sherman and Henry warn, when the national park is established therein and the hollow folk (whom they refer to as "squatters") are removed (1933, 215). The authors also identified laziness as a problem. The "squatters. . . appear to have little initiative" (173), they report, noting that "a spirit of shiftlessness characterizes much of the productive effort of these people" (Sherman and Henry 1933, 176). Housing is slipshod, not simply from ignorance, but for lack of wherewithal. With only rudimentary gardening and agricultural techniques, the Appalachians described in this work engage in subsistence living, as animals might, hunting alone in the woods (opposite to the leisurely hunting that "people normally do" in the "civilized" world) (Sherman and Henry 1933, 189). Money had little meaning as "there were few places where it could be spent" (Sherman and Henry 1933, 103). Begging is common, and men cannot be relied upon for maintaining paid employment. Sherman and Henry report that children are sedentary, lack energy, and have no meaningful career aspirations. Like an unattended litter of some forest creatures, the researchers observe of these children that their parents "exercise little control over the acts of their children" (106) and "show little concern for them" (Sherman and Henry 1933, 189). "The restrictions on the animal spirits of most children in the outside world," they summarize, "are almost non-existent in the hollows" (Sherman and Henry 1933, 107). At times, they describe residents as nearly pagan with limited or no religiosity and a limited comprehension of death or capacity for substantial grief for the loss of loved ones. These hollow folk thus exhibit an animal-like state of being in lacking understanding of property or proper engagement with a market economy. Indeed, they are depicted as lacking any complex emotional life,

simply existing to survive and reproduce. Like other animals, in this work, they resort to scrounging and begging, living in shelters cobbled together from mud and brush, and paying little mind to litters of children running loose.

Conclusion

Critical animal studies argues that what it means to be human is fundamentally shaped by our ideas about other animals and the meanings we ascribe to socially constructed species divisions. As relational social categories, humanity and animality are functional in their ability to naturalize and rationalize systems of inequality and social hierarchies. The dominant class—generally comprised of able-bodied and wealthy white male Europeans—has historically been depicted as the epitome of humanity. As a result, marginalized human groups (in addition to Nonhuman Animals themselves) have been differentiated as something less than human and—given the association between status, worth, and perceived position on the evolutionary tree—cognitively and socially inferior, as a biological fact. In the era of colonialism and nation-building, this social Darwinism could be employed to manufacture difference, justify oppression, and normalize inequality as a natural occurrence, a natural phenomenon that "civilized man" could and should manipulate for its idea of a greater (often self-serving) social good.

The case of Appalachia is interesting in that many of its inhabitants are not only white and of European descent but they also live in a developed Western country. Whether or not Appalachia can be considered another case study in colonialism, the region was nonetheless strategic in constructing America as a nation-state as both a material and symbolic matter. European immigration, African slavery, Indigenous genocide, speciesist industry, and remote geography have converged in the making of Appalachia and its inhabitants. With the delineation of American territories through treaties, wars, religious missions, and other political maneuvering, social distinctions such as race, class, and species took shape. As the United States struggled to reconstruct its identity after the Civil War and entered the world stage as an industrial leader, Appalachia as an internal "Other" preserved from the nation's founding exemplified the hardy early American pioneer that embodied the American mythos. Shapiro (1978) notes, however, that this story shifted by the end of the nineteenth century, and Appalachians were reframed as a backward region in desperate need of civilization and development. Academia and benevolence-oriented social science, as identified by Shapiro (1978) and advanced by this article, also helped shape America's understanding of Appalachia. In particular, this article has demonstrated

the complicity of early sociological surveys in Otherizing Appalachia along colonial logics of species distinction, "civilized" human supremacy, and the desire to discipline and develop "wild" spaces.

Not all surveys, of course, were equally determined to homogenize and Otherize. Campbell's (1921) work exalts the power of sociology to uplift and empower the marginalized. In an effort to draw attention and resources to the mountains, however, he often emphasized a less-than-human existence, which may have unwittingly contributed to the animalization of Appalachia. Likewise, Vincent (1898) may not have harbored ill will or ulterior motives in his depiction of Appalachia, but neither did he shy from emphasizing the rustic, naturalistic, and "less-than-civilized" nature of its people. Sherman and Henry (1933), who wrote under pressure to justify the removal of "squatters" from federal land, were far less appreciative of this perceived lack of civility. Throughout much of Sherman and Henry's *Hollow Folk*, it is unclear where the boundary between human and nonhuman lies. Sociology in the early 1900s, it appears, shares some culpability in the scientific project's weaponization of animality in order to further its progressive agenda to develop and advance society. As critical animal scholars have argued, scientific institutions have been key to constructing knowledge, legitimizing species inequality, and informing speciesist policy. These consequences frequently intersect with negative impacts suffered by marginalized human groups as well (Nibert 2002; Peggs 2011).

While the connections drawn in this article are precursory, the evidence examined herein indicates that further inquiry into Appalachian animal studies would be fruitful. Moreover, it suggests that the larger field of Appalachian studies would benefit from widening its parameters to include social constructions of species and the material conditions of other animals. The Appalachian Studies Association notes that the mission of the discipline is to "foster quality of life, democratic participation and appreciation of Appalachian experiences regionally, nationally and internationally" (Appalachian Studies Association 2022). Historically, these aims have been intended for humans only. The importance of place and the centrality of environmental exploitation to the Appalachian experience has necessitated a disciplinary engagement with the natural world, and yet Nonhuman Animals remain predominantly invisible in both scholarly and activist spaces. This is problematic for a number of reasons. In terms of suffering and injustice, the violence inflicted on Nonhuman Animals in Appalachia is of critical moral importance. For the academic discipline and adjacent activist movement, anthropocentrism is institutionalized such that perhaps a more convincing case can be made for the entangled nature of human and nonhuman inequality in Appalachia. Appalachian peoples of all races and ethnic origins have been animalized for the purposes of

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rationalizing or even justifying their oppression. The rampant environmental degradation that persists in America's eastern range, at least, has been identified as a major detriment to the health of the human population. It is this sort of intersectional consciousness that will need to be expanded to achieve the full expression of the theory. What might we glean from inquiries that take seriously the role of Nonhuman Animals in Appalachian life?

Notes

1. I have capitalized this term as a political measure of respect for the oppression of nonhumans.

2. I avoid mass terms and instead use terms such as "beavers," "deers," and "sheeps" as a measure of respect and recognition of their personhood.

3. I place euphemisms for violence such as "livestock" in quotation marks to denote their contested use at each instance.

4. See Campbell (1921, chap. 2) as an example.

5. See Campbell (1921, chaps., 3, 6, and 14, in particular).

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