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L'usage de tout système électronique ou informatique est interdit dans cette épreuve.

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Ce sujet propose les 4 documents suivants :

– une photographie de la sculpture d'un caniche par Jeff Koons ;
– un extrait du livre « Eating Animals » de Jonathan Safran Foer, publié en 2009 ;
– « The Last Days of Foie Gras », article paru en juillet 2012 dans *The Atlantic* ;
– « Animals studies branch, way out », article paru le 4 janvier 2012 dans *The International Herald Tribune.*

L'ordre dans lequel se présentent les documents est aléatoire.

Jeff Koons, *Poodle*, 1991, wood polychrome, Berardo Collection Museum, Lisbon

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Shame

Among many other things we could say about his wide-ranging explorations of literature, Walter Benjamin was the most penetrating interpreter of Franz Kafka's animal tales.

Shame is crucial in Benjamin's reading of Kafka and is imagined as a unique moral sensibility. Shame is both intimate—felt in the depths of our inner lives—and, at the same time, social—something we feel strictly before others. For Kafka, shame is a response and a responsibility before invisible others—before "unknown family," to use a phrase from Kafka's *Diaries.* It is the core experience of the ethical.

Benjamin emphasizes that Kafka's ancestors—his *unknown family*—include animals. Animals are part of the community in front of which Kafka might blush, a way of saying that they are within Kafka's sphere of moral concern. Benjamin also tells us that Kafka's animals are "receptacles of forgetting," a remark that is, at first, puzzling.

I mention these details here to frame a small story about Kafka's glance falling upon some fish in a Berlin aquarium. As told by Kafka's close friend Max Brod:

Suddenly he began to speak to the fish in their illuminated tanks. "Now at last I can look at you in peace, I don't eat you anymore." It was the time that he turned strict vegetarian. If you have never heard Kafka saying things of this sort with his own lips, it is difficult to imagine how simply and easily, without any affectation, without the least sentimentality—which was something almost completely foreign to him—he brought them out.

What had moved Kafka to become vegetarian? And why is it a comment about fish that Brod records to introduce Kafka's diet? Surely Kafka also made comments about land animals in the course of becoming vegetarian.

A possible answer lies in the connection that Benjamin makes, on the one hand, between animals and shame, and on the other, between animals and forgetting. Shame is the work of memory against forgetting. Shame is what we feel when we almost entirely—yet not entirely—forget social expectations and our obligations to others in favor of our immediate gratification. Fish, for Kafka, must have been the very flesh of forgetting: their lives are forgotten in a radical manner that is much less common in our thinking about farmed land animals.

Beyond this literal forgetting of animals by eating them, animal bodies were, for Kafka, burdened with the forgetting of all those parts of ourselves we want to forget. If we wish to disavow a part of our nature, we call it our "animal nature." We then repress or conceal that nature, and yet, as Kafka knew better than most, we sometimes wake up and find ourselves, still, only animals. And this seems right. We do not, so to speak, blush with shame before fish. We can recognize parts of ourselves in fish—spines, nociceptors (pain receptors), endorphins (that relieve pain), all of the familiar pain responses—but then deny that these animal similarities matter, and thus equally deny important parts of our humanity. What we forget about animals we begin to forget about ourselves.

Today, at stake in the question of eating animals is not only our basic ability to respond to sentient life, but our ability to respond to parts of our own (animal) being. There is a war not only between us and them, but between us and us. It is a war as old as story and more unbalanced than at any point in history. As philosopher and social critic Jacques Derrida reflects, it is

an unequal struggle, a war (whose inequality could one day be reversed) being waged between, on the one hand, those who violate not only animal life but even and also this sentiment of compassion, and, on the other hand, those who appeal for an irrefutable testimony to this pity.

War is waged over the matter of pity. This war is probably ageless but… it is passing through a critical phase. We are passing through that phase, and it passes through us. To think the war we find ourselves waging is not only a duty, a responsibility, an obligation, it is also a necessity, a constraint that, like it or not, directly or indirectly, no one can escape…. The animal looks at us, and we are naked before it.

Silently the animal catches our glance. The animal looks at us, and whether we look away (from the animal, our plate, our concern, ourselves) or not, we are exposed. Whether we change our lives or do nothing, we have responded. To do nothing is to do something.

Perhaps the innocence of young children and their freedom from certain responsibilities allow them to absorb an animal's silence and gaze with more ease than adults. Perhaps our children, at least, have not taken a side in our war, only the spoils.

Jonathan Safran Foer, *Eating Animals*, Little, Brown and Company, New York, 2009, p. 36–38.

the Atlantic
JULY/AUGUST 2012

The Last Days of Foie Gras

IRATE CHEFS, FRENZIED GOURMANDS, AND THE RISE OF ANIMAL RIGHTS IN CALIFORNIA

By Ed Leibowitz

IT IS SATURDAY EVENING at Mélisse, a Michelin two-star French restaurant in Santa Monica, and the chef, Josiah Citrin, has spent most of the past five hours engaged in what will soon be punishable offenses: poaching grossly enlarged duck liver to accompany a filet of Dover sole, folding grossly enlarged duck liver into agnolotti, whipping grossly enlarged duck liver into a mousse that will rest on a substratum of blood-orange gelée. On July 1, California's foie gras ban will go into effect, making it illegal to raise, sell, or serve any product made through gavage, a method of force-feeding waterfowl in order to swell their livers to *gras* proportions. And so, in the weeks leading up to this animal-rights equivalent of the Volstead Act, Citrin has been serving a seven-course "Foie for All" menu. He's found 11 takers tonight, at $185 a pop. [...]

Citrin has joined a coalition of more than 100 chefs lobbying for the reversal or suspension of the foie gras ban. (The coalition, which insists that it does not oppose animal rights, says it favors the humane treatment of *all* livestock, waterfowl included.) In a few days, many of the chefs will travel to Sacramento to lobby on foie's behalf, and in the weeks ahead, high-end restaurants will hold foie-filled dinners to raise funds for their quixotic fight. The campaign has captivated and divided the food world. Wolfgang Puck is one of the rare celebrity chefs supporting the ban; its foes include Thomas Keller and Anthony Bourdain (who, despite having no restaurant in California, is one of the law's more belligerent opponents).

California's foie gras statute passed in 2004, but implementation was delayed in order to give Sonoma-Artisan Foie Gras, the state's only producer, time to find a method of rapidly fattening its ducks that is less cruel than forcing tubes down their throats. Perhaps not surprisingly, given that no such alternative had materialized since the ancient Egyptians inaugurated the practice, the past eight years yielded no breakthroughs, and Sonoma-Artisan is shutting down. Those years did, however, see legislative victory after victory on behalf of animal rights. In 2008, Californians voted—in greater numbers than for any other initiative in state history—to pass the Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act, which dictates that pregnant pigs, egg-laying hens, and calves raised for veal have enough room to lie down, stand up, turn in a circle, and stretch their limbs freely. That same year, the legislature passed a law that would have (had it not been unanimously overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court) prevented ill or incapacitated pigs, cows, goats, and sheep from being bulldozed or forklifted to their execution. And in October 2011, Governor Jerry Brown signed a law banning the sale, trade, or possession of shark fins, a Chinese delicacy.

Strangely, these animal-rights triumphs coincided with a rising cult of animal protein and artisanal butchery among the state's gourmands. Last year, a sold-out crowd filled St. Vibiana's, a deconsecrated cathedral in downtown Los Angeles, to witness the hacking-apart of two whole hogs (and to eat their meat). The aptly named Animal is arguably L.A.'s most influential new restaurant of the past five years, on the strength of its veal brains, pig tails, and copious foie. This sudden vogue for carnage has led to a curious situation, in which diners at high-end California restaurants nod approvingly at menus that brag about the bio-sustainable provenance of the asparagus spears and the happy, grass-fed history of the lamb shanks, even as they sample liver from a duck that in its final weeks was probably force-fed enough calories to fuel its flight around the world—had it not by then been too fat to move.

Perplexed by these contradictions, I recently went to San Francisco to see John Burton, the chairman of the state's Democratic Party and the original patron of the anti-gavage law. A dependably profane mainstay of California public life, Burton introduced the bill while serving his last term as president pro tem of the state Senate; hearing of the chefs' insurrection this spring, he told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that he'd "like to sit all 100 of them down and have duck and goose fat—better yet, dry oatmeal—shoved down their throats over and over and over again." A postcard of a duck lay on his disorderly desk, across which he lobbed grenades at each of the chefs' arguments. [...]

Provided the law stands—and it is expected to, given that no one in Sacramento seems keen to revisit gavage in the midst of a budget crisis—California's chefs will have to decide whether to obey it or, as some have already threatened, defy it (and risk a $1,000-a-plate fine). Such culinary disobedience has some precedent: Chicago, which in 2006 implemented the nation's first foie gras ban, recently overturned its law, in part because it was so widely flouted, and in part because then Mayor Richard M. Daley claimed it had made his city "the laughingstock of the nation." (Though not the world. Under Hitler, Germany was the first country to criminalize force-feeding of fowl; several countries—including Israel, Italy, Denmark, the Czech Republic, and Poland—have since outlawed gavage. None of these bans extends to consumption, however; Germans, who updated their ban in the 1990s, eat 170 tons of foie gras a year.)

Back at Mélisse, the servers swoop in on my table with dessert. As I spoon up the last of the ambrosial foie gras ice cream and apples with foie

gras Chantilly cream, I'm ready for a self-imposed ban of my own; I've had enough velvety richness for a few decades. I'm pleased to discover that I can still walk, however. Citrin tells me this was by design. "You ate maybe six and a half ounces of foie," he says. "We don't want to make you feel like you got stuffed—like you're one of those gavage ducks."

Ed Leibowitz is a writer at large for Los Angeles magazine.

International Herald Tribune January 4, 2012

Animal studies branch out, way out

Scholars who examine humans join a growing, but still undefined, field

By James Gorman

Once, animals at the university were the province of science. Rats ran through mazes in the psychology lab, cows mooed in the vet barns, the monkeys of neuroscience chattered in their cages. And on the dissecting tables of undergraduates, preserved frogs kept a deathly silence.

On the other side of campus, in the seminar rooms and lecture halls of the liberal arts and social sciences, where monkey chow is never served and all the mazes are made of words, the attention of scholars was firmly fixed on humans.

No longer. This spring, freshmen at Harvard can take "Human, Animals and Cyborgs." Last year Dartmouth offered "Animals and Women in Western Literature: Nags, Bitches and Shrews." New York University offers "Animals, People and Those in Between."

The courses are part of the growing, but still undefined, field of animal studies. So far, says Marc Bekoff, an emeritus professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Colorado, the field includes "anything that has to do with the way humans and animals interact." Art, literature, sociology, anthropology, film, theater, philosophy, religion — there are animals in all of them.

The field builds partly on a long history of scientific research that has blurred the once-sharp distinction between humans and other animals. Other species have been shown to have aspects of language, tool use, even the roots of morality. It also grows out of a field called cultural studies, in which the academy has turned its attention over the years to ignored and marginalized humans. [...]

Animals have never been ignored by scholars, of course. Thinkers and writers of all ages have grappled with what separates humans from the other animals and how we should treat our distant and not-so-distant cousins. But this burst of interest is new, however, and scholars see several reasons for the growth of the field.

Kari Weil, a philosophy professor at Wesleyan whose book "Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?" will be published in the spring, said that behavioral and environmental science had laid a foundation by giving humans "the sense that we are a species among other species" — that we, like other animals, are "subject to the forces of nature."

Think of the effect Jane Goodall had when she first showed the world a social and emotional side of chimpanzees that made it almost impossible to keep them on the other side of the divide. Or watch the popular YouTube video of a New Caledonian crow bending a wire into a tool to fish food out of a container, and ask yourself how old a child would have to be to figure out the problem.

The most direct influence may have come from philosophy. Peter Singer's 1975 book "Animal Liberation" was a landmark in arguing against killing, eating and experimenting on animals. He questioned how humans could exclude animals from moral consideration, how they could justify causing animals pain.

Lori Gruen, head of the philosophy department at Wesleyan and coordinator of the summer program in animal studies there, said one of the major questions in philosophy was "Who should we direct our moral interest to?" Thirty years ago, she said, animals were at the margins of philosophical discussions of ethics; now "the animal question is right in the center of ethical discussion."

And of public interest. Jane Desmond of the University of Illinois, a cultural anthropologist who organized a series of talks there about animals, says that what goes on in the public arena, beyond the university, has had a role in prompting new attention to animals. There are worries about the safety of the food chain, along with popular books about refusing to kill and eat animals.

Animals as food are a major subject of academic interest, Ms. Gruen said, adding, "Given that the way most people interact with animals is when they're dead and eaten, that becomes a big question." [...]