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Mediation for affect: Coming to care about factory-farmed animals

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Mediation for Affect: Coming to Care about Factory Farmed Animals

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Abstract

In this paper we examine the digitalised emotional campaigning of one of Australia's peak animal welfare organisations. Animals Australia, focusing on their most effective digital strategies associated with their campaigns against factory farming. Our broader interest lies with sounding out the affective affordances of the technologies informing such activist work; technologies of affect in a very significant sense. This discussion will comprise three parts. First we unpack the context for the problematic faced by animal (and environmental) activists: neoliberalism, showing how neoliberal assumptions constrain such activists to emotional appeals and denounce them for such strategizing. Secondly we sound out some of the affordances of digital media technologies for affectively oriented activists; and finally we delve into some of Animals Australia's digital campaigning with regards to issues of factory farming in order to show the efficacy of such affectively oriented mediated strategizing for facilitating care for factory farmed animals.

Keywords:

Affect, Web 2.0, animal activism, mobilisation, mediation

Introduction

With the development and introduction of anti-activist legislation and in particular what are known as 'ag-gag' laws in various parts of the world including Australia, it is increasingly common for neoliberal states to cast animal and environmental activists as economic saboteurs and domestic terrorists (Sorenson, 2016a; 2016b; 2009). More specifically much activism on these fronts is framed as being intrinsically unreasonable – as, that is, an attack on human wellbeing and economic security. Indeed it is becoming increasingly difficult for reasoned arguments concerning animal and environmental welfare to position either of these two domains – of non-human animals and the environment – as mattering on the grounds of intrinsic value; or at least it is becoming more difficult for such arguments to gain traction within the public sphere (Sorenson, 2009). Both domains certainly are accorded some value and welfare rights within the public sphere, but primarily with reference to human interests; they hold instrumental value and receive some protection through such, but any more stringent arguments for their protection at the expense of perceived human interests tend to be seen as wrong-headed (Munro, 2004). One strategy for activists has been to deliberately evoke and appeal to emotion as the basis for awarding some further protections to animals

and the environment (Jacobsson & Lindblom, 2013; Herzog & Golden, 2009). These have typically been appeals to human sentimentality with reference either to ‘attractive’ or ‘majestic’ animals or environmental features, or to the immense levels of suffering experienced by ‘innocent’ animals – or the immense levels of environmental degradation – being carried out on the basis of seemingly trivial human consumer interests.

In this paper, we explore some of the contexts and strategies – and success stories – of such appeals in the context of animal activism, paying particular attention to the affordances of Web 2.0 digital technologies for emotionally laden activist campaigning. More specifically, we examine the digitalised emotional campaigning of one of Australia’s peak animal welfare bodies, Animals Australia, focusing in particular on some of their most effective digital strategies associated with their campaigns against factory farming. Our broader interest, in other words, lies with sounding out the affective affordances of the technologies informing such activist work; these are, we contend, technologies of affect in a very significant sense. This discussion will comprise four parts. First we outline our focus and our methods: our focus on the campaigning work of animal welfare and activist organisation Animals Australia, our engagement of methods of content analysis of media materials, and our rejection of digital activism entailing only clicktivism or slacktivism. Second we briefly unpack the broader context for the afore-mentioned problematic faced by animal and environmental activists: neoliberalism, showing how neoliberal assumptions constrain such activists to emotional appeals and concurrently denounce them for such strategizing. Thirdly we sound out some of the main affordances of digital media technologies for affectively oriented activists; and fourthly and finally we delve into some of Animals Australia’s digital campaigning with regards to issues of factory farming in order to show the efficacy of such affectively oriented mediated strategizing for the facilitation of consumer caring about factory farmed animals.

Focus and Methods

Animals Australia – a not-for-profit representing some 40 member groups and over 1.5 million individual supporters – has been recognised for several years as one of Australia’s foremost national animal protection and advocacy organisation, along with the RSPCA and Voiceless, the three comprising the largest animal protection organisations within Australia (Chen, 2016). Animals Australia has emerged, with Voiceless, as a peak bridging organisation, acting as “information hubs between smaller groups, as gateways and gatekeepers between them, and as decision-makers in interactions with industry and

government” (Chen, 2016, p. 128). This latter role has been particularly important for Animals Australia, with the organisation’s unremitting campaigning with regards to live export playing, for instance, a significant role with regards to the development, introduction and continued oversight of the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) which built on pre-existing export licensing agreements to produce a tighter regulatory system for the majority of Australia’s live-exported animals. In the words of Lyn White, the director of Animals Australia,

Animals Australia has become a de facto government agency, providing the only oversight of live export regulations on the ground in importing countries. Some two-thirds of all investigations undertaken by the Department of Agriculture into breaches by export companies are based on Animals Australia’s evidence. (White as cited in Chen, 2016, p. 308).

Also significant for our choice of Animals Australia is that this organisation, along with its global arm, Animals International, possesses a well-recognised international and national track record in investigating and exposing animal cruelty and for conducting strategic and effective public awareness campaigns (Animals Australia, n.d.). Indeed the organisation is recognized as possessing substantial “expertise in running public media campaigns” (Chen, 2016, p. 181). In 2015, for example, the organisation was recognised as a “standout charity” by the U.S.-based Animal Charity Evaluators, this being the first time an Australian based organisation has been so selected (ACE, 2017; Animals Australia, 2016). Within the Australian context, footage from Animals Australia’s national and international investigations into animal cruelty (in such contexts as factory farming, live export, slaughterhouses, greyhound racing, duck shooting, and puppy farming) has been featured on every current affairs program – both commercial and public channels – within Australia, including *Four Corners*, *60 Minutes*, *Today Tonight*, *A Current Affair*, *7.30*, *The Project*, *Lateline* and *Landline*. The organisation also uses these materials to develop a range of broader multimedia public campaigns around these issues.

To analyse the affordances and effectiveness of of Animals Australia’s affective framing across their *Make it Possible* digital media campaign, we have utilised methods of content analysis (Weerakkody, 2009; Sarantakos, 2005; Asa Berger, 2000). Materials have been collected from selected phases of the campaign: from the comments concerning the YouTube video (collected October 2012 to November 2013), from the *My Make it Possible Story* website (stories collected October 2013 to January 2014) and from a range of other

online fora discussing the campaign. Collected materials were then analysed for affective and motivational content: moral and emotive framing of content (the use of strategies designed to garner affective response: anthropomorphism, moral interpellation, the generation of moral shock, affirmation through community, the development of an affective economy); expressions of individual and collective feeling (sadness, horror, anger, guilt); and expressions of commitment to change. We also draw on the findings of some of our previous analyses of this campaign (see Rodan & Mummery, 2016; 2014a; 2014b).

Finally we stress that although Gladwell (2010) and others take the view that individual actions using social media do not lead to social action – naming it, disparagingly, slacktivism or clicktivism – this is not a view with which we agree. Certainly such actions as clicking *like* or *share*, or signing electronic petitions can tend to look “less impressive to large publics and political decision makers than offline protests” (Rucht, 2013, p. 260). Indeed, a key issue here is that it is difficult to measure effective outcomes of social media campaigns in any evidential form (Serup Christensen, 2011). Further there is a strong view that because offline protests require people’s time, resources and energy, they demonstrate more personal investment, commitment and belief and will be more effective (Gladwell, 2010; Rucht, 2013; 2004). However, activists clearly value social media campaigning and social media engagement as effective tools insofar as they can: mobilise weak ties to raise public awareness around an issue (see Rodan & Mummery, 2017); show decision makers that public attitudes are changing (that is, that opinions are not limited to a few *noisy* activist groups); and reveal that a broad-based assemblage of individuals and collectivities are prepared to take public action over specific issues.

Animal Activism on the Neoliberal Stage and the Appeal to Affect

In the last decades, the FBI has come to describe environmentalists and animal rights activists as the top domestic terrorist threat in the U.S. (Sorenson, 2016; Greer, 2013; Potter, 2011), and members of these groups are being targeted under ‘ag-gag’ laws such as the U.S. 2006 *Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act* which has allowed for the argument that any activists who cause a loss of profits to animal enterprises, or who interfere with the operations of these enterprises, should face prosecution (Potter & Eng, 2014). Following the same trajectory, in the week after Trump was elected president, the Republican state senator from Washington, Doug Ericksen, proposed a bill that would create a new class of felony for what he has called “economic terrorism”, thereby facilitating the criminalising of protests that can be argued as aimed at causing economic damage (Harper, 2017). Within Australia, while the New South

Wales government's *Biosecurity Act 2015* represents Australia's first ag-gag law per se (Chen, 2016), animal and environmental activists are increasingly being presented within the Australian public sphere as economic threats, and even described as terrorists. One such example of this framing was when the New South Wales Primary Industries Minister Katrina Hodgkinson said that animal activists who were covertly filming animal abuse in factory farms and abattoirs were carrying out acts "akin to terrorism" (cited in Greer, 2013; also see *ABC News*, 2013). Similarly, in 2012 Australia's former Resources and Energy Federal Minister Martin Ferguson, not only requested increased surveillance of environmental activists who were peacefully protesting at coal-fired power stations and coal export facilities, but was being prompted by energy company lobbying to urge harsher criminal penalties against protests that disrupted critical energy infrastructure (Dorling, 2012). Or there is the period in 2015 when Australia's Attorney-General George Brandis and then Prime Minister Tony Abbott accused environmental groups of engaging in acts of economic sabotage and lawfare in their attempts to use public mobilisation and legal challenges to block the going ahead of Adani's Carmichael mega-coalmine in Queensland's Galilee Basin (Balogh & McKenna, 2015; Medhora & Robertson, 2015).

Such framings of activism are of little surprise on a neoliberal stage. Neoliberalism, after all, can broadly be understood as referring to a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being – in both individual and collective senses – can be best supported and advanced through endorsing a market logic across not only economic but political and social contexts – or, better, seeing these contexts as indistinguishable under a market logic (Harvey, 2007). One result of this is that neoliberalism foregrounds individual strategizing, consumer choice and the advocacy of free enterprise on the one hand, while denying "the legitimacy of state responsibility for the quality of life of its citizens" (McLagan & McKee, 2012, p. 11) on the other. The effect of this is that individual solutions to perceived instances of injustice and inequality will tend to be promoted "over collective solutions" (Maddison & Martin, 2010, p.104), to the point that a "fully realized neoliberal citizenry would be the opposite of public-minded; indeed, it would barely exist as a public" (Brown, 2005, p. 43).

There are two associated problems therefore that social movement and social change activists cannot but have with neoliberal ideology. First, social movements – whether these are protest movements, online activist movements or a combination of both – are by definition "collective forms of protest or activism that aim to affect some kind of transformation in existing structures of power that have created inequality, injustice,

disadvantage, and so on” (Martin, 2015, p. 1). That is, because they rely on individuals identifying with the collective interest and participating in communal activities toward social change, the assumptions and work of social movements and activists are clearly not in alignment with neoliberal assumptions concerning change. Secondly, relatedly, neoliberalism casts a façade of distrust over the work of social movements and activists. This work is considered unnecessary because the neoliberal attitude is that individuals would actually possess no rights either to challenge market distributions or claim any distribution of resources other than that produced by the marketplace and their own marketplace activities. It is work that is perceived as unreasonable in many ways too. Because marketplace operation is considered under neoliberalism a matter of neutral, value-free laws (Harvey, 2007), this means that the social effects of the marketplace are themselves to be understood as an inevitable rather than constructed order. This means in turn that challenging the operation of the marketplace can be seen as intrinsically wrong or nonsensical, and activists can easily become framed as dissidents, as we have noted at the beginning of this section.

If ideas of a public good independent of the operation of the market are always suspect, the work of animal and environmental activists is even further de-normalised through neoliberalism insofar as they are fighting for something that itself possesses – and can possess – only instrumental value within that regime (Sorenson, 2009; Torres, 2007). That is, given that this regime has commodified both animals and the environment (Kirjner, 2015; Francione & Garner, 2010; Torres, 2007), attempts to argue for the inherent value of either non-human species or the environment – and therefore for fundamentally different treatment – can only be seen as unreasonable or threatening by the neoliberal state (Sorenson, 2009; Munro, 2004). Animal welfare regulation should rather be a matter of market regulation – the dominant strain of regulatory thought in the United States, the United Kingdom and, arguably, Australia (Timoshanko, 2015) – a view which supports the continued political weight given to arguments by Australia’s agricultural industry that improved animal welfare standards would adversely impact on the economic competitiveness of Australian animal products (Eyers, 2016).

One outcome of this neoliberal anthropocentrism has been to strengthen an already existing tendency within such activism towards affective campaigning – meaning campaigning operating on the basis and power of emotional appeals – even as this turn to affective campaigning is itself decried as unreasonable within the neoliberal context. (Although neoliberalism celebrates emotional engagement, development of the self and of self-interest are considered the only coherent aims of such engagement; see Smith, 2015).

The use of affective campaigning by activists is, nonetheless, longstanding with it having been recognised by social movements that individuals need to form “a cognitive, moral, and emotional connection” with that movement’s aims and broader community (Poletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 285) and that it is this process of connection and identification that facilitates mobilisation and action (Hunt & Benford, 2004; Melucci, 2013). Mobilisation, after all, is also an activation of solidarity, and solidarity arguably “arises from affective stakes – caring for someone, outrage about an injustice, or aspiration for a changed world” (Shotwell, 2011, p. 100). Here the idea is that emotion and affect – the latter referring to the sticky residue or impression left by the movement of emotion (Ahmed, 2004b) – are always more than private matters belonging to individuals. Distributed across both social and psychic fields, emotions and affect ripple stickily, moving sideways and backwards, sliding from one object to a completely different one (Ahmed, 2004a). Such circulation of emotion between people, as well as between people and images or objects, itself a process of charging bodies and objects, is what Ahmed refers to as the “affective economy” (2004a, p. 120). Emotions and affect hence do things; they align and bind individuals into communities, forming collectivities and solidarity (Ahmed, 2004a; 2004b; Kuntsman, 2012; Watkins, 2010). They are both as such – by definition – markers of value and investment, and the basis for mobilisation.

Examinations of the use of emotion and affect in the animal rights movement have in turn argued that a common strategy in this context is the use of “moral shock”, meaning “when an event or situation raises such a sense of outrage in people that they become inclined toward political action” (Jasper & Nelkin, 1992). Moral shocks are most effective when they are “embodied in, or translatable into, powerful condensing symbols” – what have also been called “symbolic forms” (Ferrada Stoeckel, 2016) – able to “neatly capture – both cognitively and emotionally – a range of meanings, and convey a frame, a master frame, or theme” (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995, p. 498). As animal rights and welfare movements have long realised, representations of animals are effective condensing symbolic forms able to convey a master frame of cruelty and suffering to produce the moral shock – what we would also call the affective charge – required to engage and motivate people both individually and collectively (Nabi, 2009; Wrenn, 2013). Consequently, animal activists have a history of using disturbing images of animal suffering, with the common argument being that such “shock tactics” are necessary because the suffering of animals is “a hidden taboo that society is very reluctant to notice, let alone address” (Aaltola, 2014, p. 28). Indeed, as has been argued with reference to the controversy surrounding the live export industry within Australia since Animals Australia’s investigations and the airing of their footage of animal cruelty on

national television, “the public’s ire” is raised “not by persuasive intellectual arguments, but rather by the moral shock of seeing animal suffering on television” (Munro, 2015, p. 10). Importantly, however, it is also recognised in this space that such shock tactics will be most effective when viewers are also pointed to an action that they can take to help the situation (Aaltola, 2014). Given the capacity, then, for the affective work of moral shocks – when strategically used and linked to achievable actions – to align individual respondents into collectivities, social movement campaigns must all strive to be “affectively charged” so as to gain recognition and build momentum and action around issues (Kuntsman, 2012, p. 7; also see Rodan & Mummery, 2014b).

Mediation for Affect in Digital Culture

This is where Web 2.0 digital media step in. Certainly it is well known that the kinds of horizontal participatory networks constitutive of a digitally networked culture have also facilitated the growth of social networks for activist movements and organisations, allowing them to extend their reach beyond their “already consolidated support base” (Akin, Encina, Restivo, Schwartz, & Tyagi, 2012, p. 94). That is, digital media platforms allow for the sharing of content across multiple platforms, including online mainstream news sites. They also facilitate the interconnection of materials and messages with those of others, with the content from celebrities, online journalists and other bloggers being able to be shared, retweeted and sent viral. In addition, through Web2.0 platforms digital influencers can increase the reach of any message beyond an organisation’s website and/or an individual’s personal network. This is the amassing of “networked publics” (Papacharissi, 2015). Clay Shirky (2011) in particular has argued that Web 2.0 technologies and platforms need to be understood as a crucial tool for the effective coordination of political movements: enabling low cost coordination of actions and the sharing of information both within and across publics, whilst also facilitating ongoing dialogue through which participants can further develop their own political views. This is to say that because content can be shared across multiple networks – at a faster pace than mainstream media and easily shared again by any single network participant (Papacharissi, 2015, p. 35) – activist activities using these technologies are constitutively generative, feeding and stimulating engagements well beyond the networks directly connected with the organisation.

More specifically, Web 2.0 platforms – operating in such multiple roles as a “high-volume website”, “broadcast platform”, “media archive”, and a “social network” (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 5) – enable activists to carry out a range of actions in aid of galvanising

participation and campaign momentum. They can use them to promote campaigns and specified campaign actions both online and offline; provide a feedback loop for campaigns; find out who is identifying with their messages; identify new campaign message recipients; and build a content database. This last point is worth stressing given that both internet web pages and social media platforms can operate as archival spaces in which activists can store – and share – campaign videos, multimedia testimonials, celebrity endorsements, hyperlinks, campaign achievements, and media releases, as well as records of public-private sentiments about campaign issues.

In addition, however, these technologies are themselves personal, even intimate. For instance, Web 2.0 platforms in effect “coax life-narratives from ... users” (Morrison, 2014, p. 119) in the form of multiple personal updates, which are then shared with personal social networks. Their intimacy is also increased with their proximity and ubiquity in our lives, with their use being facilitated in particular through mobile, close at hand and wearable devices that are intimately connected to the body in both activity and repose. These technologies, in other words, exemplify a mediation of the personal, and it is this interconnection of “personal spheres of representation with public or semi-public spheres of political interaction” (Miloni & Triga, 2012, p. 5; also see Bimber, Flanagin & Stohl, 2005) that is considered to strengthen the idea that a personalised participatory politics can be effective in mobilising broader political and social actions. Bennett and Segerberg (2012, p. 760), for instance, talk of “personalized collective action” essentially organised through social media in their analyses of large digital activist movements. Of this form of action, they identify two key elements: a) the “personal action frames” which cover the various reasons – themselves typically affectively laden – provided as to why individuals should contest and work towards changing a state of affairs; and b) the use of “personal technologies” such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, email that enable the personalising and the sharing of reasons for change (pp. 744-45). Indeed, as they note, it is the “network mode” of social media that enables individuals to share “grievances” broadly in “very personalized accounts” that is of importance to activists (p. 742). All platforms, after all, have the affordances for activism to target individual users – and strive to facilitate an individual’s alignment of their personal interests, beliefs and values with specific issues and campaigns – and they also work to connect those individuals with each other. Indeed these platforms function as a “conduit” (Papacharissi, 2015, p.133) of personalised feelings and emotion. The main point here, however, is that activist campaigning in this domain must always target personalised frameworks. And as they rely on a model of voluntary engagement and sharing that always starts – if it starts – at the

individual level, activists unsurprisingly drive their campaigns via frames of moral and emotional urgency.

These frames, as previously noted above, are most powerful in the form of visual representations, and the easy circulation of such material through digital media is thus an important affordance for digital activist campaigns. That is, as noted above, it is well-recognised that “emotionally arousing images” are highly effective in drawing a response from viewers and facilitating participation in some form of collective action (cited in Kharroub & Bas, 2016, p. 1977), to the point that most social movements and activist groups use visuals as a “tactical strategy” (Carty & Onyett, 2006, p. 237). Visuals, after all, make things public; they are an integral part of “the relational processes through which particular relations of social power” can be reinscribed as issues of personal as well as “political concern and concrete transformation” (McLagan & McKee, 2012, pp. 9-10). In effect, the personalised circulation of affectively charged visual representations through digital media can be enough to both mobilise and connect individuals into action. It is these same capacities that can also facilitate the development of memes and the possibility of viral uptake, this latter being the last great affordance of digital media for activism – increasing a campaign size and keeping it ranked high in daily digital media feeds so that it becomes and remains highly visible in both personalised social networks and the public sphere. In total, Web2.0 platforms matter to activist organisations because they afford the spreading of video and digital affective influences and messages which can be (re)circulated speedily and go viral to as broad an audience as possible.

Digitalising for Affect with Animals Australia

These capacities direct the multi-media digital campaigning of Animals Australia which is aimed at achieving a change in consciousness with regards to human-animal relations. The organisation thus sees its remit as to undertake two interwoven roles: to be both a peak body representing a large number of grass roots groups; and a campaign-focussed organisation working to raise community awareness of animal cruelty and promote reform. The organisation’s mission, as detailed in its main website, is hence to: investigate, expose and raise community awareness of animal cruelty; provide animals with the strongest representation possible to Government and other decision-makers; educate, inspire, empower and enlist the support of the community to prevent and prohibit animal cruelty; and generally strengthen the animal protection movement (Animals Australia, n.d.). In delivery of its mission, the organisation engages not only the platforms of public rallies and protests,

government and industry submissions, corporate outreach, various forms of print and broadcast media (television, radio, newspapers, and billboards) as well as the web to present its campaigns, but multiple forms of social media, including Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.

Within this broad mission, one issue in particular has been the focus of much of this organisation's focus in campaigning in recent years: the plight of animals used in factory farming. Although there are multiple campaigns by this organisation tackling this issue, one in particular has stood out to the point of founding a separate web and social media presence from that of the Animals Australia main sites: *Make it Possible* (tackling the predicament of pigs and chickens in particular within Australian factory farms). Launched in 2012, and still active, this began as a visually compelling multimedia campaign, using both still images and videos of not only animals within factory farm contexts but of celebrity and ordinary Australians – who are filmed expressing their horror, disgust, and determination to make a difference within this situation – to connect with, shock, and engage viewers in both personal and collective activism both online and offline. Images in particular are used and framed so as to drive a single message home across all of the campaign's platforms and genres: factory farming is a major cause of animal cruelty; all factory farmed animals experience a life of intolerable and unnecessary suffering; each of us can and should work to end the factory farming of animals (see Lyn White cited in *ABC Landline*, 2013).

Animals are thus represented throughout this campaign as suffering subjects. They are represented in the campaign video (see, for instance, the campaign transcript, *Animals Australia*, 2012) as yearning for a better life, for “a new way of living”. They are described as “living lives of abject misery”, as “waking up each day, just to suffer”; descriptions which are reinforced with images of confinement, overcrowding, lightlessness and industrial sterility. The campaign reminds viewers that the animals kept in these barren and constrictive conditions are “no different to our pets at home”; that they are “someone, not something”. Further driving this message home, animals in this campaign are explicitly anthropomorphised, given human voice, expression and desires; they are also individuated, with recurring close-ups of real animal faces and eyes, directly challenging any tendency to see these animals as nothing more than a resource to be used, as livestock. As Anthony Ritchie, one of the campaigners with *Animals Australia*, stressed with regards to the development of this video, this deliberate focus on likeness and the facilitation of empathy was integral:

Pigs and chickens aren't animals that people instantly connect with or have empathy for so our first task was simply getting people to like them – to think about them in a different way and to understand that these animals share the same capacity to suffer and to feel love as our dogs and cats at home. The success of movies like *Charlotte's Web* and *Babe* gave us a great formula to work with and that's what we had in mind when we created our 'hero pig'. The rest of the TVC uses real footage from factory farms in Australia – it was critical that what we were showing reflected the current situation for most animals raised for food in Australia today. Finding the song 'Somewhere' and obtaining the rights to use it brought the vision together. We always knew that if animals could plead their own case for a kinder world then factory farming would have ended long ago and the words to 'Somewhere' so beautifully encapsulate our core message – that at the very least animals raised for food should be provided with a life worth living. (cited in van Gurp, 2012)

Similar visually and affectively oriented strategies are used throughout associated campaigns with regards to the treatment of factory farmed animals in Australian (and overseas) abattoirs. In these cases the animals speak their suffering through a harrowing series of video exposés and still images – broadcast through national television and shared over multiple forms of media – that have captured the extreme cruelty experienced by these animals in their last moments. Again, although only documented surveillance footage is used in these images, animals are individualised and personalised; it is impossible not to see the suffering of individuals in their final fights for life. And indeed this footage has been effective enough in mobilising Australians for abattoirs to be shut down, workers suspended on charges of animal cruelty, and the installation of surveillance cameras in abattoirs for worker and process monitoring. In some cases too processes have been changed to better support animal welfare. In all campaigns, what is clear is that the focus for Animals Australia is on activating affect along with viewers' ethical agency. In particular these campaigns strive to interpellate viewers to recognise themselves as being essentially compassionate and caring but ignorant of the real situation of animals in factory farming. Viewers are positioned as not knowing of the terrible price paid by animals in the consumer demand for cheap animal products; as not knowing that this demand has culminated in – to draw again on the *Make it Possible* campaign – an “animal welfare disaster of a magnitude this planet has never known”. This interpellation, however, also always encompasses a call to act. Viewers are reminded that their actions can help bring change to these situations, and to support this Animals Australia also provides viewers with a range of online tools and options through which they can express and share their own feelings and decisions with regards to their new understandings.

These options are important and, we suggest, operate to maintain the affective charge called for and generated by the campaigns as well as generating a sense of shared community among campaign followers. Indeed Animals Australia has taken very specific advantage of the capacities for affective personalised and social interaction that inform Web 2.0 digital technologies, facilitating spaces and processes for: communal debriefing, for making individual and social commitments as to change, and for sharing ideas as to how to make a difference for these animals. One such example here is the set-up of a site explicitly for sharing – and shoring up – both one’s emotional responses to the campaign and one’s commitments to change, with the *My Make it Possible Story* site asking viewers two affectively targeted questions: “How did you feel when you discovered that most eggs, poultry and pork products come from animals in factory farms?” and “How has becoming informed changed your life?”. Between October 2013 and January 2014, over 2200 stories were posted onto the site, with 1065 stories posted on 21 October 2013, the day after the site’s launch. With every story supportive of the campaign message that animals are sentient and deserving of a much better life, content analysis of these stories (Rodan & Mummery, 2016; 2014a) unsurprisingly showed that the top seven feeling words used by respondents were: sickness, horror, disgust, anger, sadness, shock, and being brought to tears. Respondents also articulated feeling misled by politicians, the government and farming industries generally, their consequent feelings of guilt in being misled, and their determination to change their own consumption practices (respondents variously committed to veganism or vegetarianism, to choosing cruelty free produce), and become advocates for animals with regards to the need to discontinue factory farming practices (see Rodan & Mummery, 2016; 2014a).

Respondents who shared their story also made reference to how the feelings invoked by the *Make it Possible* campaign fitted with their existing beliefs and feelings about animals and animal cruelty. Previous analysis (Rodan & Mummery, 2014a), for instance, showed that many of the contributors’ feelings about animal cruelty, whilst reinforced by the Animals Australia’s campaign, had already been invoked through either/or: childhood revelations or experiences; adult experiences working in abattoirs or in factory farms; their previous consumption of video and print materials. Contributed stories thus made clear that, for many respondents, the *Make it Possible* campaign was just one of many modes that exposed and lambasted cruelty to animals:

After witnessing only seconds (was all I could bear to watch) of that horrific video it messed with me emotionally for months. But it also triggered a passion and determination in me to fight for the welfare of these animals. From that moment on rather than burying my head in the sand I chose to be informed and educate myself on the truth of this horrific industry and all the other cruel animal trades rampant throughout Australia and the world. And although my heart breaks just a little each time I witness the footage of factory farming and other acts of animal cruelty alike, all in the name of greed. My eyes are open, never to be shut again!

I was watching the Peta videos at the time and I was thinking, to myself: if some evil man will take my one year old baby and violently harm her, she will behave exactly like the cows and pigs do. She will cry of pain, try to lick her wounds, and try to avoid the man who hurts her ... We are vegans now, at first it was hard but now we are healthier and let's not forget the animals have three less mouths to feed with their own body parts.

In addition, in responding to the campaign through sharing such personal stories – often of conversion or ethical sourcing of products – individuals also inform others how to make even small changes which can still contribute to the ending factory farming.

Other online options provided by the organisation also facilitate these kinds of affective responses and commitments, as well as promoting and enabling respondents' online engagement in collective actions targeting politicians and industry. What is important about these options is that they all draw on the affordances of Web 2.0 digital technologies to “produce bonds between subjects and bodies” (Ferrada Stoeihrel, 2016) and form affectively networked and charged publics (Papacharissi, 2016; 2015). After all, to energise individual social media users to take action, organisations such as Animals Australia need to make campaign causes affectively sticky, unable to be passed over or ignored. It is this, after all, that underpins the possibility of a campaign going viral. That is, while images do not actually make a revolution happen, these images do have the capacity to be a “catalyst to set off a chain reaction of mass emotion” (Mitchell, 2013, p. 96). What also needs stressing in this context is that because these technologies have all been developed to prioritise the personal – indeed, they are all best described as supporting distinctly personalised forms of social networking – they thereby cannot but foreground the affective domains of everyday life, a foregrounding that activists have been able to take full advantage of. Here it is also important to remember that Web 2.0 digital technologies are themselves immersed within neoliberal contexts. That is, not only is their development and use entrenched within commercial interests (Couldry, 2015; Poell & van Dijck, 2015), but they automatically privilege

individualised consumer interests – themselves affectively charged desires – over any idea of the public good.

It is this same framing of these technologies that activists such as Animals Australia have been able to take advantage of. If the technologies themselves foreground personalised and affectively generated and charged interests at both individual and collective levels, then activists too must campaign along these lines, particularly those promoting causes not able to be given coherent voice under neoliberal understandings of the rational. It is, indeed, only in this way, within the neoliberal context at least, that activist framings of issues have a chance of becoming so affectively sticky that they are taken up as everyday commitments. After all, it is only via the affordances of such mediated affect that Animals Australia can facilitate the possibility of consumers coming to care about the factory farmed animals that are usually never encountered as real in everyday life. That they can do so – as Animals Australia is making evident – is down, in many ways, to the affective and personalised affordances of Web 2.0 technologies. To put this another way, Web 2.0 platforms are integral to the creation and drawing in of personal social networks through which individuals can like, share and respond to a campaign. Most importantly, though, these platforms allow respondents to personalise their engagements with the campaign. In addition, it is in the act of sharing and posting responses to campaigns, as well as to associated online news reports, that affective responses can be archived on the organisation's website, Facebook, and YouTube platforms, responses that can additionally become the basis for further campaigns. These platforms therefore matter to such organisations as Animals Australia because through enabling of personalised responses, and the sharing of affective responses, they can develop and sustain a networked caring public.

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