

‘Who’s a Good Boy Then’? Anthropocentric Masculinities in Veterinary Practice

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‘The vet nurse talks to the dog, “there’s Uncle Graham”. The vet (Graham) talks in a voice usually reserved for babies, “who’s a good boy then, who’s a brave soldier?”’

In common with other professions (Le Fevre, 2010) such as health care (Adams, 2010), teaching (Drudy, 2008) and medicine (Pas and others, 2011), women are increasingly populating the veterinary profession in terms of demographics, but their trajectories usually fail to match those of men, hierarchically speaking. Translated into practice, this means that although almost 80% of vet school graduates are currently female (Vet Futures, 2014), disproportionately few have risen through the hierarchy, for its professional structure and culture remains gendered masculine’ (Irvine & Vermilya, 2010:74). As such, ‘women are much more likely than men to work in a veterinary practice as an assistant or employee, and less likely to be a sole principal, director or partner’ (Williams and Jordan, 2015: 4). Our research shows that both male and female veterinary surgeons reproduce stereotypical discourses where the maternal, more passive and ‘weaker’ body is automatically ‘conflated with the feminine’ (Fotaki, 2013, p.1257; Clarke and Knights, 2018); that is to say, women are automatically presumed to be potential mothers, and therefore treated as being problematic for long term career futures.

Part of the reason used to justify why women do not climb the hierarchy is that many choose either to leave the profession or transfer to part-time work in order to bring up a family, because commonly it is expected or assumed that a woman’s career will be subject to ‘either/or decisions made between ‘productive and reproductive work (Gatrell, 2008). However, these unequal patterns are not just due to the attraction of family but can also be linked to the pressures and problems of

the work, where ‘one in seven vets suffer burnout within the first ten years after graduation, intensifying to ‘one in five female vets...in their first five years after graduation’ (Williams and Jordan, 2015: 17).

However, employee turnover among vets is high although for various reasons, many, especially women with families, opt for a partial exit through part-time work, but this only reinforces the prevailing hierarchy where young women dominate the lower, and older men the senior, ranks of the profession. A part of it has to be the limited gender awareness of those occupying the masculine managerial hierarchies in vet practices, whereupon the women (or at least their career ambitions) become the sacrificial lambs. The anxieties, intensification and pressures of work at the level of practice are seemingly not examined by managers as a major reason why women may seek to escape, either by taking on part time or exiting work when an opportunity arises.

Introduction

In contrast to health practitioners and medics, the working lives of veterinary surgeons (vets) remain under-explored by organisational researchers particularly in terms of gender. While there is a professional literature concerning vets, it rarely focuses on the lives of the practitioners themselves let alone issues of gender. Instead, it tends to focus on how vets contract disease or injury from human-animal interactions (Hjorth & Roed-Peterson, 1980), mental health (Allister, 2015) and suicide problems (Hansez et al., 2008; Bartram and Baldwin, 2010), the complexities of human-animal interactions (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012), and regulatory anomalies relating to the profession (Hobson-West & Timmons, 2015). Only a minority of studies have drawn attention to professional exclusivity and hierarchical/gendered status (Hamilton, 2013, Irvine & Vermilya, 2010; Page-Jones & Abbey, 2015, Clarke & Knights, 2015).

In our view, however, veterinary surgeons provide a fascinating platform from which to study anthropocentrism that we argue is gendered in both genesis and practice. The central contribution of this article is to demonstrate a link between anthropocentrism, and gendered discourses of masculinity in veterinary work and organization. We are concerned with the overlapping relationship between humanism and anthropocentrism and our research question focuses on how their embeddedness in gendered masculine discourses and practices might be illuminated through a study of veterinary surgeons. Our title ‘who’s a good boy then?’ reflects a variety of meanings: first, it indicates patronizing, anthropocentric claims of mastery over the animal; second, it assumes the male body as default (Gatens, 1996); and third it refers to the routinely male dominant practices in the profession. This reflects and reproduces masculine anthropocentric beliefs in linear rational control and the supremacy of humankind, together with a desire to satisfy clients in commercial service encounters, largely for purposes of maintaining effective economic transactions, but also to ensure the vet’s own successful career (Clarke & Knights, 2015). We locate our arguments in a posthumanist feminist philosophical perspective that seeks to challenge the gendered anthropocentric organization of veterinary work.

This article then, addresses problems of ‘anthropocentric masculinities’ in the veterinary profession. It concerns the way that caring for animals in intensive work environments requires veterinary surgeons to become zoocentric with a tendency to neglect their own bodies in terms of rest, food, emotional nourishment and physical safety, all of which are exacerbated not just by virtue of the dangerous nature, but also the intensification, of their work. This tendency, however, reflects and reproduces an anthropocentric trajectory whereby veterinary scientific training and the clinical practice of serving the interests of clients, places vets in a position of omniscience and omnipotence with regard to animals (Hamilton and Taylor, 2013; Clarke and Knights, 2018). We argue that this same anthropocentrism is linked to discourses of masculinity, which in veterinary practice reflects and reproduces gendered asymmetries of relations and rewards. This leads us to

explore several research questions that have been suggested for this special issue: How are masculinities and animal life intertwined and sometimes, in competition with one another? How are the relations between human and non-human animals gendered? How do these relations sustain gendered inequalities?

The remainder of the article is organised as follows, first we discuss gendered practices in the veterinary profession as we draw limitedly on literature related to the changing context and content of the profession. We focus on gender to demonstrate how the practice of veterinary work is organized in specifically gendered masculine ways, despite increasingly feminized demographics in the profession. By way of contextualizing this within the philosophy of humanism from which it derives, we consult the literature from a posthumanist perspective to show how people's concern and 'care' for animals is firmly embedded within an anthropocentric framework, which we argue is also highly masculine in its genesis and reproduction. An outline of the methodological and analytical approach adopted prepares the ground for presenting the data from our study of 10 different veterinary practices, including numerous non-participant observations and 75 interviews. We then organise our data into three sections: first, in order to show how veterinary surgeons often neglect their own bodies in what *appears* to be a zoocentric focus on the animal, but which in practice becomes entangled with masculine and anthropocentric notions of human-animal supremacy; second, we illustrate how male vets are rewarded for 'good behaviour, while women find it difficult to gain similar access to senior management positions; and third we show how anthropocentric veterinary practices are firmly embedded in masculine notions of animal ownership and control. We then finish with a short conclusion, having already situated our data analysis within theoretical discussions.

Literature Review

Gendered Practices in the Veterinary Profession

We subscribe here to an understanding of gender ‘not as the natural properties of biological men and women, but as the socially produced pattern of meanings that distinguish the masculine from the feminine’ (Pullen & Rhodes, 2008, p.7). We also view gender as ‘a fundamental organizing principle ... that cuts through other social identities’ (van den Brink and Benschop, 2014, p. 461), while simultaneously reproducing high levels of inequality within deeply masculine cultures (Bagilhole & White, 2013; Britton, 2000; Savigny, 2014). In referring to masculine cultures or gendered organizations, we include particular mechanisms that stereotypically value and reinforce ‘competitiveness, command-control behaviours and achievement’, which tend to disadvantage women (Miller, 2005, p. 104) and become entrenched, but rarely challenged. These reflect and reproduce narratives of mastery that extend beyond the field of gender to encompass what we call anthropocentric masculinities, whereby men seek to transform animals and nature into orderly, predictable and serviceable objects of human(istic) desire, such that ‘the use and abuse of animals...[has become]... ‘deeply ingrained in the construction of human, particularly male subjectivity’ (Labatut et al., 2016, p.322). Skills of mastery, competitiveness and orderliness are clearly evidenced in Enticott’s rich account of TB testing protocols among vets, where he found them ‘bragging over who holds the record for the quickest test and the most cattle tested in a day’ (2012, p.17). Even though a dominant masculine discourse revolves around logocentric (Derrida, 1997) or phallogocentric (Cixous, 2010) linear rationality, we also recognize that there are a multiplicity of masculinities and femininities, and that their boundaries can be fragile and fragmented as well as porous and permeable.

The veterinary profession is increasingly becoming feminized, but in the sense of changing gender demographics (Acker, 1990; Fondas, 1997), as are other professions such as academia (Reskin & Roos, 1990), school teaching (Ingerson & Perda, 2008), dentistry and prison management (Britton, 2000). Despite 80 % of current veterinary school graduates being female (RCVS, 2015), and women now for the first time ever outnumbering males (RCVS, 2014), veterinary practices are still comparatively insensitive to gender issues for their ‘professional structure and culture’ remains ‘gendered masculine’ (Irvine & Vermilya, 2010, p. 74), such that

advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine (Acker, 1990, p. 146).

In veterinary practice, this translates to disproportionately more females working part-time, while few rise through the hierarchy, as women are ‘much less likely to be a specialist, sole principal, director or partner’ (RCVS, 2015, p. 4). Moreover, Williams (2014) suggests that women have also ‘struggled to enter certain areas of the profession, such as orthopaedic surgery, farm animal practice and senior-positions in higher education’(p.1) where little has changed in terms of unequal gendered power relations. Despite the feminisation of the profession in terms of demographics, there are many veterinary practices where ‘all the Partners_i in the practice are male’ (p. 1) and as such we argue that the veterinary profession has gender ‘built into the very structure and culture of [its] organizations’ (Pullen et al., 2017, p.107) as the lived, practical and embodied routines of everyday work illustrate.

Employee turnover among vets is high, and for various reasons women are ‘more likely to be working part time than men’ (RCVS, 2014 quoted in RCVS, 2015, p.3). According to a survey about vet futures (RCVS, 2015) almost 20% of vets were working part time compared with 11%

in 2000, and many of our female participants declared that they chose part time work once they had started a family. While there are numerous ways of understanding this, one possibility is the stress of the job combined with the constraints on their ambitions given the dominant masculine hierarchical organizational culture of work (Gatrell, 2008). Veterinary professions are by no means unique in these patters, since similar shifts have occurred in dentistry and medicine (McKinstry et al., 2006), particularly in relation to General Practitioners,

while more women than men will soon be practicing medicine globally, there is a trend for women to work part-time, and women will still not access senior positions in many areas of medicine...Surgery will still offer a male-dominated speciality (Bleakley, 2014, p.111)

However, our specific focus is more directly on the hegemonic constructions of gender. While these are significant in the reproduction of veterinary organizational practices, for the most part employees ignore them or take them for granted as unremarkable features of the workplace because the male body is, in effect, the standard against which human accomplishments and achievements are measured, not only in modern business, but also entertainment and sport. However, in order to disrupt taken-for-granted gender norms and practices (Parsons & Priola, 2013), we need to challenge ‘the masculine celebration of prowess’ and heroics that, elevate competitive success, physical and mental stamina, and view excessive working hours as a badge of honour (Kondo, 1990, p. 259).

We will seek to accomplish this and disrupt these practices through posthumanist challenges to anthropocentric, and humanistic masculinities that underlie the care and control of animals within the veterinary profession, in which women as well as animals are treated as subordinates.

Post-Humanism

As with so many post dawn awakenings, posthumanism has a diversity of different meanings, from rejecting the idea that humans are at the centre of the universe, to the belief that human reason depends on an escape from our animal origins to some cybernetic transcendence of our very embodiment (Hayles, 1999), the displacement of cognition as we become a ‘body without organs’ (Deleuze & Guattari’s (1988, p.149) or a perspective that ‘returns us to our messy, material, and embodied contingency – including (but not limited to) our evolutionary inheritance and symbiotic entanglements *as animals*, as fellow creatures’ (Wolfe in Cole et al. 2011, p. 102). While posthumanism can be divided into factions, a common denominator is a belief that it is a successor to, and transcendence of, the dogma of human pre-eminence, anthropocentrism and speciesism. An alternative position is to argue that posthumanism ‘comes before and after humanism’ – before in the sense that it ‘names the embodiment and embeddedness of the human being’ and after in the sense of opposing ‘the fantasies of disembodiment and autonomy, inherited from humanism’ (Wolfe, 2010, p. xv). While ‘the anthropocentrism of liberal humanism is challenged by animal studies’ (Fudge in Cole et al., 2011, p.94), posthumanism goes much further in the criticism of human autonomy, rationality and teleology as well as the anthropocentric presumption that humans have sovereign rights over all they survey, and should always be ‘*the first one served*’ (de Fontenay, 2012, p.52; Wolfe, 2010). Posthumanism also questions the anthropocentric and humanistic masculinities that through disembodied autonomy profess care, while controlling the marked ‘other’ – animals, children, women, minorities, nature, and the body. Calvo points to systems of social organization that often violently ‘privilege’[s] the human’ over the non-human animate world’ (2008, p.34), while Tito (2008), for example, calls for a departure from ‘human chauvinism’, by situating the non-human animal as a *subject*. Similarly, Fox and McLean demand a shift in paradigm away from ‘domination, exploitation, oppression and violence’ towards a more ethical approach of mutual respect and even exchange (2008, p,251).

A 'dismissal of humanist feminism' by posthumanists has been criticised as 'not only philosophically suspect but also politically short-sighted', for humanism is much more complex and diverse than any of its critics acknowledge (Stavro-Pearce et al. 1994, p. 218-220). Yet posthumanism need not set up a binary between humanism and itself such that it is explicitly anti-humanist; instead, it simply has to extend beyond, and collapse these 'lethal binaries' in search of more affirmative alternatives (Braidotti, 2013, p.37-39, Knights, 2015). Consequently, we can oppose individualism and demands for autonomy without abandoning or dismissing all humanistic values, such as respect for life and community. In problematising relations of human domination, we have sympathy with Cole et al.'s observation that 'Wolfe sees inevitable and unbreakable links between the speciesist relegation of animals to the realm of inferior other, and the human repression of other humans' (2011, p.94). We cannot but agree that the treatment of animals as inferior readily spills over to fellow (sic) humans, and it is what we are referring to as masculine anthropocentricities, where a lack of care or outright discrimination is projected on any difference that fails to confirm the dominant position.

Research Design

As a way of studying the intricate relations between human and non-human animals in veterinary practice, ethnographies are rare, yet 'eminently suitable' (Hamilton & Taylor, 2013, p.167), as particular attention can be paid to the ways in which cultural practices are performed, enacted and organised; a matter made infinitely more complex 'because the actors belong to different species' (ibid, p.168). In society (and thus organizations) people 'tend to be reduced to their object like qualities, as vehicles for the expression of values' and so it is the aim and 'work of ethnography ... to reveal these reductive processes' (Miller, 2005, p. Kindle location 761), particularly because most studies that account for animals do so from a humanistic perspective. Ethnography provides

the opportunity to do otherwise, so it chimes with a desire to approach our research from a posthumanist standpoint, as it ‘has the potential to acknowledge other-than-human life and to advocate for its inclusion in social science studies’; being also ‘a powerful tool that challenges anthropocentric legacies and *legitimizes the study of human-animal relations.*’ (Hamilton & Taylor, 2017, p.15 Original emphasis).

Like all studies, ours was one where ‘accident and happenstance’ shaped the fieldwork ‘as much as planning or foresight’ (van Maanen 2011, p.2), for it was the experience of our time in the field that prompted us to reflect on the bodily entanglements between non-human animals and human-animals. Moreover, we also became interested in the ways that anthropocentric and humanistic conceptions of the non-human animal dominate in the everyday practices of vets, while understanding that *our* inability to directly access the inner worlds of non-human animals is not an excuse for erasing their ‘voice’,

The fact that animals live and are interactively entangled with humans is enough of a reason to justify their inclusion in some form of ethnographic work. (Hamilton and Taylor, 2017, p.13)

Data Collection

The study consisted of two stages: Stage 1 - a pilot study comprising 12 interviews and observations was carried out in January 2013. Stage 2 followed between April 2013 - September 2015 with a more substantial interview programme involving 10 practices, with a final count of 75 interviews lasting around 1 hour, with vets of varied age and experience, including junior vets through to partners/ directors. Veterinary practices are heterogeneous in their organisation; they may be big or small, deal specifically with large animals (farm stock), small ‘companion’ animals (primarily cats and dogs), equine (horses owned for leisure or sport), or offer a ‘mixed practice’ providing all,

or some of these in combination. Our access was initially negotiated via e mail from a central list of veterinary practices throughout the UK, inviting them to participate, but subsequently we adopted a less formal approach, including and approaching practices following chance conversations with colleagues and friends. A final sample was organised to ensure some representation of all types of practices (although we make no claims to statistical representation), where interviews and observations took place with 11 Equine, 34 Large, and 30 Small animal vets in both specialised and mixed practices, in urban and rural areas, in the North, South, and West of England. No vets refused to be interviewedⁱⁱ, and of the 75 carried out, there were 39 males and 36 females, with an age range between 25 and 63.

Conducting research in an ethnographic manner promises a grasp of the complexities of the routine and mundane practices in the organizational arena (Koot, 1995). Since first-opinion vets engage heavily in social interactions we observed how they performed during consultations and in the operating theatre, interviewed them and generally ‘lurked’ around to gain a nuanced understanding of the everyday nature of veterinary work, and to appreciate their relationship with important ‘others’ such as veterinary nurses, clients and patients. Our methods meant ‘zooming in on the inherently political nature of practices’ (Nicolini, 2009, p.125), to watch how they were enacted and embodied, rather than just receiving logocentric accounts. This allowed us to witness ‘the small and big conflicts and breakdowns that they encounter in their practice’ and the ‘asymmetries and inequalities produced and reproduced in the process’ (Nicolini, 2009, p.135), and we made field notes of these routine observations.

Nevertheless, it has been argued that interviews are ‘the ethnographer’s most important data gathering technique’ (Fetterman, 1989, p. 37), and so we asked our participants to talk broadly about their relationship with the veterinary profession. Questions such as ‘why did you choose this particular branch of veterinary medicine?’, ‘can you describe what would happen during a

‘nightmare day at work?’ and ‘can you describe a good day here?’, were used to invoke stories around the physical, social, political and ethical challenges arising from their occupation.

Data Analysis

After transcribing our digitally recorded interviews, our findings were examined to recognise how ‘dominant meanings emerge from the power-laden nature of organizational contexts’ (Grant & Hardy, 2003, p.5). We immersed ourselves in reading and rereading our text in order to establish themes and patterns around the experience of being a vet in contemporary times. Since we agree that ‘discourse analysis should be considered as movement rather than a fixed method, [with] a “sensitivity to language” that is betrayed if it is reduced to a series of steps’ (Parker, 2014, p.198), we particularly focussed on challenging any taken for granted nature of language and its use. We coded our interview text in NVIVO using initial first order general concepts such as gender, bodies, neglect, control before refining and sub-dividing these categories into ‘second order’ or more analytical concepts, including anthropocentrism, masculinities, anthropomorphism and zoocentrism.

Finally, we critically analysed and interrogated our interview transcripts in order to understand how particular discourses were deployed to disrupt or maintain existing power relations, since ‘naturalization gives dominant ideologies the status of common sense’ rendering them ‘opaque’ (Fairclough, 2003, p.132). Recognising how regimes of truth (Foucault, 1998) are solidified through constant repetition over time, the primary task of the researcher is to understand how concepts tend to recur in the data, for example, part-time female vets were discursively constructed as not ‘credible’ for consideration as directors, while anthropocentric assumptions meant that notions of ‘expertise’ would automatically resolve any ethical dilemmas and ambiguities surrounding animal treatment. This led to anthropocentrism and masculinity emerging as central

Page | 12

and significant concepts in our data, despite our not setting out to research them in the original concern to develop an empirically informed understanding of the profession and its preoccupations. In considering our data we were aware that rather than a benign apolitical mechanism for revealing information, language constitutes both a condition and consequence of embodied practices (Frank, 1990), situated within specific knowledge/power relations in both time and space (Hardy & Phillips, 2004).

Findings and Theoretical Analysis iii

Anthropocentrism and humanism rest on the taken-for-granted belief in man as the centre of the universe, the top of a hierarchy of moral value, while the ‘other’, whether animal, vegetable, mineral or any other aspect of ‘nature’ is subordinate. With respect to animals,

Either nonhuman animals are *not* to be morally considered or their moral consideration is *lower* than the moral consideration of human animals (Parea & Faez, 2014, p.96, Original emphasis)

While the overlap between humanism and anthropocentrism is principally that of human pre-eminence, the latter involves a preoccupation with the care and control of animals and other forms of nature, whereas the former has concerned itself primarily with controlling and caring for humans. Embedded in notions of human superiority and entitlement are masculine discourses and practices that echo Bederman’s (1996) observation that ‘male dominance and white supremacy have a strong historical connection’ (p.239). This supremacy of human animals tends to legitimise the use of non-human others as a (disposable) resource, an ideology that is ‘constantly reinvented’,

so that the human-animal (particularly the white male) retains the status of being '*the first one served*' (de Fontenay, 2012, p.52).

We felt that this notion of being 'first served' was highly appropriate in a study about gendered anthropocentrism, and as such we present our findings by asking 'who is served by whom, to what extent, and for what purpose'. This framework enabled us to consider our findings from a variety of perspectives centred on those 'masculine anthropocentricities', that are both a medium and an outcome of gendered and humanistic inequalities, in which women, as well as animals, are treated as subordinate or inferior to man.

Serving the Animal?

The idea that by attending to one thing we must necessarily neglect another is hardly novel, and merely highlights contradictions evident within aporias of undecidability (Derrida, 1982) and responsibility (Levinas, 1985). Relatedly, masculine practices associated with much of working life, in or outside of the so-called professions, often result in sacrifices to the body in exchange for stable and secure employment career, status and social recognition (Clarke & Knights, 2015). Identity concerns and masculinities are also linked to a neglect of the body, whereby there is a reluctance to admit to bodily limitations because 'vulnerabilities' are often conflated with fragility and weakness (Haas, 1977).

While observing the intense working lives of our participants, we noted how in attending to the bodies of their animal patients vets often disregarded, or forgot to care for themselves in matters of food, sleep, and general physical wellbeing, as well as adequate emotional nourishment through leisure time. One interpretation of veterinary work is that it can appear to be zoocentric, as vets often subordinated their own bodies, and even their own safety, to attend to the bodies of animal patients. Perhaps this considerable sacrifice is understandable in an occupation traditionally

characterised by esteem and prestige, where the majority talk either of a vocational ‘calling’ originating in childhood (Page-Jones & Abbey, 2015, p. 434) and/or a love of animals (Sanders, 1994).

This neglect of the human-animal body featured in different ways in our participants’ accounts, usually in response to the question about their fictionalised ‘nightmare’ day,

If I could change something about this place it is just to have more time to think and more time to actually look after myself a bit. Eat, and not eat rubbish because that’s all I can grab (Female, Equine Vet)

Similarly, for some vets, being on call greatly affected their sleep, even when not attending to patients,

On call I don't really sleep, I just doze. I liken it to new parents listening out for their kids, I'm always listening out for that phone, waiting for that ring, so that's quite stressful. (Male, LA Vet)

Unlike medics, vets are on-call *in addition to*, rather than *instead of*, their regular working day, and as such it is possible for them to experience 48 hours without sleep,

...if the phone goes at three in the morning you’ve got to get up, go and do the call, and then go to work for the whole day (Female, SA Vet)

Not surprisingly, a dearth of sleep can have real effects, for example vets suffer more car accidents than many other occupations (Trimpop, et al., 2000), which could be partly explained by the mileage covered, but our accounts also show a link with sleep deprivation,

I almost hit a wall driving, because I wasn't fully awake (Male, LA Partner)

It is well documented that stress is a problem that arises from intensified working practices (Jeyaretnam & Jones, 2000) that are not only physically and mentally harmful, but also often result in deprivations relating to social life, leisure time, and emotional support. Many pointed to how veterinary practice is

socially isolating, because it's long hours and out of hours and it's weekends. (Female, SA Vet)

Of course, the neglect of the self is common in many occupations (Townley, 2008; Clarke et al., 2012) perhaps partly accounting for the current growth and popularity of the wellbeing, wellness and happiness industries (Davies, 2015; Cederström & Spicer, 2015), which could be seen as putting 'sticking plasters' on a cancerous wound. For vets, this neglect may seem absurd given their heavy involvement in the care of other bodies, but this is also evident in occupations such as doctors (Wallace et al., 2009; The Lancet, 2011) and nurses (Lawler, 2006).

Enacting veterinary work often requires an interdependency and entanglement of human-animal and non-human animal bodies, both capable of committing some form of violence on the other, inscribing permanent reminders of a specific moment in time; an indelible corporeal legacy. Obviously through medical intervention, the animal bears the scars of surgery but there were few vets who did not experience physical injury to their bodies, constituting the 'incorporated histories'

(Thompson, 1991, p.13) of their veterinary work. Many, if not most vets bore a form of permanent bodily inscription from encounters due to scratches, bites, or kicks from animals (Nienhaus, et al. 2005). Although animals rarely have an ‘opportunity to fight back’ or resist treatment (Labatut et al., 2016), clearly this physical domination of animals by humans comes at a price,

‘I’ve got a steel hip; I’m going in for knee surgery in three weeks. I’ve broken several fingers, bones in that thumb, that finger, the metacarpal there, both wrists’ (Male, LA Partner)

These demanding physical conditions were reported to be partly the reason why some vets, usually women in later career, transferred to small animal work. Such accounts were common but they reproduce gendered discourses of fragile female bodies avoiding danger, that men rarely embrace or vocalise in sustaining their masculinities (Edwards, 2006).

[small animal] has not got the thrill and the buzz...but since I’ve had children I’ve realised how dangerous it is ...[getting] kicked...you’re frequently trying to shift a cow between three of you, nearly 800 kilos...and it’s quite a physical job (Female, SA Vet)

These assumptions were not unfounded for ‘the treating of large animals is more hazardous than the treating of small animals [and]...the injury tends to be more severe’ (Nienhaus, et al., 2005, p.234). However, working with small animals did not provide immunity from acquiring physical souvenirs, as scratches and bites were also common injuries.

So far, we have presented data that appears to demonstrate zoocentric behaviour, for at times vets seem to sacrifice their bodies to care for the animal, but perhaps it is necessary to interrogate these presumptions more fully. While we do not mean to imply that vets are disingenuous in their

discourses of care in relation to the animal, we should at least consider how in maintaining the appearance of serving the animal, vets, and indeed most of us human-animals, continue to serve ourselves. For example, Bauman (1995) suggests that medical discourses of care and control, and, we would add, other animal interventions, merely masquerade as rationalisations for adapting animals to professed human ‘needs’, while Calvo draws our attention to how the ‘needs, desires, interests and even whims of human beings shape the kinds of relationships we are likely to have with non-human species’ (2008, p.34). These demands might be companionship, food, clothes, or leisure pursuits such as hunting, racing, or other ‘entertainment’ spectacles, and almost always involve regimes for embellishing the social status of humans through disciplining the animal, as exhibited in agricultural or dog shows, dressage, animal shows in zoos/leisure parks, and, of course, the circus.

Haraway (1991; 2008) argues that in contemporary Western culture, the boundaries between human/animal or organisms/machines and physical/non-physical have become solidified, and in our research there were numerous illustrations of how ‘veterinary discourses of care are translated into physical modes of dominance over animal bodies’ (Hamilton, 2013, p. 270). In this sense, we argue that by ‘serving the animal’ principally for commercial purposes, veterinary professionals are very often complicit in meeting the anthropomorphic, or commercial demands of the client. For example, during our observations of consults, vets were keen to keep *clients* happy,

Reg (vet) describes Ollie the Labrador as ‘handsome’, the client looks suitably pleased.

After the check-up Reg says ‘that’s it for the MOT then. So, have I met all the family now?’ He is acutely aware of how pets form part of the family, and his comment provides affirmation of this. [Field notes, consultation Male, SA Vet]

Moreover, by subjecting vets to masculine demands of working intensively to increase profit margins for partners-owners or corporate practices, veterinary organizations have come to resemble 'Greedy Institutions' that require undivided time and loyalty from individuals who work for them (Coser, 1974). In establishing an empathetic mastery and control over the bodies of animals, these gendered organizations, we argue, also tend to reinforce and reproduce both anthropomorphic and anthropocentric, masculine practices.

We now turn to section two of our data, that is more explicit in demonstrating the different ways in which the human-animal maintains its entitlement of being the '*first served*' (de Fontenay 2012, p.52).

First Served

Anthropocentrism is predicated on the assumption that humans are 'running the machine', (Bennett, 2012, p.44), whilst elevated over, and distinct from, all other forms of nature. Wolfe argues that scholarly concerns have failed to interrogate 'the confidence with which the boundary between human and nonhuman animals is taken for granted as an ethical (non)issue' (2010 p.49), and this itself forms part of our anthropocentricity. Animals, particularly 'companion' animals are fashioned as being at the nexus of 'owned objects' and 'sentient beings', and in a 'liminal position between the socially constructed categories of person/being and that of nonperson/object' (Sanders, 1995, p.209). Often their fate, particularly in terms of life or death, rests on the calculation (be it implicit or explicit) of a set of complex and interrelated factors such as the age of the animal, the cost of any treatment, and the 'emotional, ethical and economic effect of their survival or non-survival on their '*human-animal owners*' (Sanders, 1995, p.209, our emphasis).

These calculations are articulated openly by one or both parties during the everyday interactions between veterinary surgeons and their client-relations, , and often involve *speciesism*, which must

be differentiated from anthropocentrism. Speciesism is concerned with the ways that humans differentiate between the moral consideration that takes place *within* the non-human animal species, either by favouring one species over another (e.g. I love dogs or horses), or by making another species less, or unworthy of moral consideration (e.g. I hate rats or snakes). Importantly, this stands in contrast to anthropocentrism where human animals confer 'either less, or no moral status on all non-human forms of nature' (Faria & Paez, 2014, p.4.)

Since vets are not homogenous, they varied in the extent to which they expressed anthropocentric tendencies, but there was a frequent theme around animals having 'their place', firmly below the human animal. Here one vet articulates a more extreme view,

a cynic would say your job is to keep the client happy, regardless of whether the 'thing' is getting better or not (Male, SA vet)

Given how most vets enter the profession because of a love of animals, referring to them as a 'thing' was rare, although many did refer to the animal body using the non-gendered term 'it'. Some vets spoke uncritically of animals as disposable resources, as well as a resource at the disposal of humans, often reinforcing hierarchical power relations alongside clear expressions of moral anthropocentrism,

It is *only* a horse and I think... we do often forget (Male, Equine Partner).

However, other vets expressed tensions as to whether they did/should view animals as 'objects' and 'resources', or living sentient beings equal to human-animals (Singer, 1995). Humanist/masculine assumptions of men mastering all that they survey (i.e. everything that is Other – nature, animals, women) underpins the justification for *speciesism* that tends to become

both a medium and an outcome of culturally embedded and prescribed hierarchical orders. Consequently, different societies and individuals tend to place more value on this animal, rather than that animal, in what Francione calls our 'moral schizophrenia' (2004),

it's this old problem isn't it, why is the horse so special? why am I happy to eat ten chickens? I don't need to. But...I'll go out of my way to save one horse. There's no logic to it, it's just a bizarre, socially constructed idea about what's the right way to treat certain animals (Male, Equine Vet)

Clearly this vet expresses some ambivalence about the way hierarchies of species are constructed and different animals are treated, but resorts to processes of animal consumption as a normalising benchmark, rather than a practice requiring interrogation. As such, he implicitly constructs a 'two wrongs make a right' argument – if it is OK to kill chickens then it might be OK to treat horses in the same way. Although he may be making a theoretical challenge against speciesism, he does spend all day looking after horses, while also eating chickens, so in practice speciesism remains intact.

Most of our participants appeared either indifferent, or subscribed to a humanist conception of animal rights,

I think as long as the animal's life is as good as possible while it's alive and its end is as humane as possible that's alright (Female, SA Vet).

Here the vet focuses on avoiding prolonged pain or suffering to animal patients, but this criterion of 'humanity' is always political, for its very definition 'functions as [both] a norm and an

exclusion' (de Fontenay, 2012, p.24). Once human-animals establish their (unchallenged) 'ownership' of an animal, the unequivocal right to decide its fate soon follows,

The way life has panned out, humans have the last say on animals' (Female SA Vet)

This sense of entitlement, we argue, is rooted in masculine 'moral' anthropocentrism often associated with discourses of conquest, control and ownership, and tends to rely on the taking for granted nature of speciesism – 'that is, of the ethical acceptability of the systematic "noncriminal putting to death" of animals based solely on their species' (Wolfe, 2003, p.7). These philosophical views are reinforced and reproduced by veterinary surgeons through omnipotent practices and the unquestioned and 'privileged vantage point' they maintain over animals (Hamilton & Taylor, 2013, p.170),

They live so long because we look after them so well, so quite often we owe it to them to let them go with dignity rather than draw out their suffering (Female, SA Vet)

Here, anthropocentric and humanist views regarding the right to animal 'ownership', coupled with self-aggrandizing benevolence in providing 'care' can appear patronising ('we...let them go'). Moreover, it tends to overlook how many clinical interventions executed by vets on animals, are directly or indirectly, made only for the benefit of the human-animal.^{iv}

Nevertheless, many are sensitive to the large numbers of animals that are abused, neglected and abandoned by their animal 'owners', who are usually viewed with 'considerable distaste' (Sanders, 1994, p.194),

I have trouble with people's lack of attachment with an animal that they've chosen to have. I don't like someone that says they love their horses; they buy this horse: they treat it like shit (Male, Equine Vet)

A few vets disclosed how they struggled with the pervasive anthropocentric view of animals as a disposable resource, readily discarded once no longer able to serve their 'owners',

The thing I find hard ... 95% of clients' first question is 'can I compete this weekend?' ... 'Well, no, he's going to need six months off.' 'Well, it's no good to me... can you put it down, please?'. (Male, Equine Vet)

Despite some vets articulating concerns, veterinary work tends to result in a compliance with such requests, where ethical struggles or a refusal to acquiesce with client demands were often fleeting and rare,

when I first graduated, I had to put down a healthy dog, and I thought, 'I'll make a stand, I won't do it' ...but other vets at the practice were prepared to do it. After that, I slightly lost the fight. I thought, 'well, you do put down cows to eat them, you put down farm animals because it's uneconomic, so actually putting down a healthy animal probably, ethically, is arguably okay' (Male, SA Vet)

While clearly conscious of the ethical problems surrounding euthanasia, this vet could well have decided, possibly correctly, that his career would not survive such a moral and political stand and so rationalised his climb down. Moral anthropocentrism, when the hierarchical superiority of humans is simply asserted, legitimises speciesism as a 'basic non-revisable moral belief' (Faria &

Paez, 2014, p6), where the consumption of meat and ‘putting down farm animals because it is uneconomic’ is again drawn upon as a normalising practice, rather than interrogated.

Anthropocentric requests often trumped welfare concerns through naturalised and simple statements of ‘ownership’, used as a device to simply resolve or dissolve ethical dilemmas,

When you make a decision regarding this animal, you always have to think what's going to happen if you do or don't do it...I've also been told at university that our job is not just to serve and treat animals but also look after the public ... it's the owner's welfare as well, not only animal welfare, in my opinion. (Female, SA Vet)

Aside from this vet believing that ethical matters can be resolved by masculine commands from ‘the university’, there seems to be a contradiction here with the oath that vets take, promising to consider the welfare of the animal *above all else* (RCVS, <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/>). In other words, the oath requires vets to ensure that the animal, rather than the client is *first served*.

Like Page-Jones and Abbey (2015) our vets often provided accounts that incorporated a long-standing yearning to enter the profession based on an absolute love of animals, through an arguably patronising discourse of desire to ‘help’ or ‘fix’ them. Without in any way wishing to criticise these accounts as disingenuous, they do ignore how human domination over animals often renders ‘intervention’ necessary in the first place. Evidence of this was contained in our research when it was reported how an animal was appropriated from the wild, with anthropocentric intentions of ‘helping’ or ‘caring’ for it,

I've just had a cat that was FIV positive. It was a seemingly healthy cat, the owners brought it in as a stray, just to get checked over. It was a lovely, friendly cat, really purring and wanting affection, and protocol unfortunately unveiled that it was FIV positive. And we talked about it and ethically it was difficult, but we couldn't really justify keeping this cat alive because it can spread this disease to other cats. So, these poor people had brought the cat in and they thought they'd brought it for its execution. They were saying to me, "oh, he was rolling around the field happily and now we're having to put him to sleep" (Male, SA vet)

Vetting requires masculine practices of control and mastery over the animal's body, reflected in how the anthropocentric term 'stray', and 'owners' is assigned and deployed unproblematically. The client-vet deliberations automatically assume domination over the animal body, anguishing over 'having to' put the cat to sleep, and expressing sympathy for 'the poor people' who found the cat. Simultaneously, the vet is anthropomorphic in describing the cat as 'friendly' and 'wanting affection', attributes that are attractive precisely because they constitute 'tameness', the criterion required to *serve* human-animals as companions. This example renders explicit what is normally taken for granted; that animals are largely appropriated to benefit human-animals, and vets (often unwittingly) appear complicit in facilitating and normalising these practices.

In this section of our data we have shown how the relations between human and non-human animals are enacted through masculine anthropocentric practices, which often lead to domination of the non-human animal. We now consider how these masculine veterinary practices also serve to maintain the privilege of male vets by continuing to marginalise those of females.

First Served (again)

‘Humanity is male, and man defines woman, not in herself, but in relation to himself’

(de Beauvoir, 1953, p.23)

We have demonstrated some of the different ways that human-animals come to dominate non-human animals, albeit sometimes in the guise of self-sacrificing zoocentric behaviour, but here we illustrate how this masculine domination extends to particular sections of its own species (Cole et al., 2011), and often serves to exploit, marginalise and oppress female vets. However, it is equally important to understand how anthropocentric masculinities inform practices that are not separate from, but tied in with, the domination of animals, for it is claimed that

“the oppression of women and the other animals [are] interdependent” (Adams, 1990, p.16)

Our research found that persistent inequalities are reproduced by both male and female vets to ‘the male norm...the ideology that naturalizes and justifies men’s domination over women’ (Wahl, 2010, p.133). Even though 80% of female veterinary graduates and more than 50% of practitioners are now female (RCVS, 2014), there remains an unfair ‘distribution of privilege and advantage between women and men’ (Pullen et al., 2017, p.108). Most vets appeared to accept, and even reify the existing hierarchical order in relation to career, pay, promotion (Irvine & Vermilya, 2010) and hierarchical status. Our argument is that despite most vets being ‘clever girls’ in passing exams, being selected for, and graduating from veterinary school, the persistent and unequal visibility of male vets as partners and directors at the top of the hierarchy means that, in practice, masculine privilege ensures that it is the ‘good boys’ who are rewarded. As such, we continue to argue that in the veterinary profession the masculine is privileged over the feminine and ‘symbolically and ideologically’ predicated on ‘hegemonically defined masculinities’ (Britton, 2000, p. 420).

Earlier, we suggested that bodies of vets are salient to our study because they are engaged in practices of zoocentricism and anthropocentrism, but they are also important in terms of gender because vetting is a physical job that allows ‘weakness’ to be used to impose limitations, or even (self) exclusion, on those deemed to be *less strong*,

[the problem of large animal work] It's just the physical part of the job for a woman.

Mostly that. Nothing else. (Female, SA Vet)

As a woman, being a female, I knew I wanted a family and I thought physically I just might not be able to cope with [large animals] for very long. (Female, SA Vet)

Despite the feminist challenge to such normative frameworks (Bartky, 1988; McNealy, 1992), these vets are complicit in reproducing the female as fragile and vulnerable where the ‘passive woman’ has been exploited as little more than an accessory to men’s masculine projects. In our study, for example, we observed how female vets were frequently referred to as ‘the girls’, and administration staff as ‘those lovely ladies on reception’ (Male, SA animal partner), while female clients (especially equine) were sometimes spoken of disparagingly as ‘tricky middle-aged women’ (Male, Equine partner).

Through repetition, female passivity can readily become ‘fact’ (Monteiro, 1991, p.31), but occasionally the correlation between physical strength and the job was challenged,

Most of our job doesn’t require any strength. The bits that do require strength, often require technique, more than strength. And if it is pure strength you need, well you’ve usually got a farmer standing next to you, who’s strong (Female, LA vet)

However, whilst suggesting that technique (a skill that can be acquired) is more important and different from 'pure strength', the vet still subordinates herself to the strong farmer, whereas a male vet would equally require assistance in certain circumstances, but would rarely denigrate himself as *lacking* physical strength,

I've come across chauvinism in the past; I think that's much less so now. ... [Women] can ...use their charm in situations, which do require some physical strength to actually just get the farmer to help. (Male, LA Partner)

This is a typical illustration of a vet simultaneously reinforcing chauvinism while claiming it to be no longer prevalent, for he proceeds to construct female vets in stereotypical terms, suggesting they use 'charm' to redress gender physical 'imbalances'. These represent the 'subtle ways in which the gendered organization often operates' (Pullen, 2017, p.107) and should not be underestimated or ignored. The female vet is frequently constructed as having to defend/justify her position as a vet, whereas the 'default' identity of male vet was 'unmarked' (Laclau, 1994), and his body remained the model or standard (Gatens, 1996, p.24) against which to measure the female body as inferior.

We also found that gender discrimination and masculine hierarchical practices were so normalised and naturalised that both male and females largely reproduced, rather than interrogated certain practices,

I might be wrong but being an assistant in the practice, I'm just the vet. [The clients] don't know us as well as the boys who've been here longer; the boys being the directors.

I suppose most of them do listen to your opinion but perhaps would be more interested

in what the men have to say. That's not a sexist thing, that's more of a "they're the boss thing". It's difficult to separate it out because most of the assistants are girls and most of the bosses are men. You get the feeling it's because you're a girl but most of them is because you're the assistant, not because you're a girl. I don't feel like I need to get on a massive feminist rant about it because I don't feel like that, for a lot of the time.

(Female, LA Vet)

Here the female vet seems to consider gender as less relevant in how she is treated than hierarchy and seniority. While avoiding attributions of sexism to the clients, her language is far from gender 'neutral' in stating unproblematically that it is 'the boys who are the directors' while 'most of the assistants are girls'. In saying this, she makes their seniority, rather than their gender more salient, but appears not to make any link between gender and hierarchy, such that the latter appears to be entirely independent of the former. This comparative marginalisation of gender was quite typical among our participants and perhaps partly reflects their privileged class and educational background as well as their scientific training.

There was also an issue of self-blame among female vets, who were sometimes almost apologetic for not being male,

...there's a couple of farms where we have one male assistant and I think he gets better responses there than I do, but then maybe *I'm too girly* (Female, LA Vet)

Rather than challenging the masculine organization of vetting where women seem to be assigned a secondary subordinate status, she resorts to gender stereotypes where being 'too girly' is a problem. In contrast, a *minority* of vets did acknowledge client gender discrimination,

I still do think that male vets are valued higher than females...I've seen it. I've experienced it. I had a case, a lady in hysterics, and as soon as a male vet came on the scene she was completely different and he hadn't contributed to this case beyond that he's seen her for five minutes and that's it. He was "the best vet ever" and I do still think that happens, yes. (Female, SA Vet)

This client discrimination cannot be readily disentangled in so far as masculine hierarchies reflect and reproduce the gendered organization, but this is partly due to how women are 'subsumed by their collective identities as reproductive and sexualized bodies, in a manner which does not apply to men' (Gatrell, 2008, p.14). In this sense, women must subordinate themselves to dominant (default) masculine norms, where the onus of responsibility for care-giving is unquestionably female, which results in tensions between women's 'productive and reproductive work' (Gatrell, 2008).

These tensions are clearly evidenced by the working patterns of female vets, for in 2014 almost 20% of vets worked part time, compared with 11% in 2000, with women far 'more likely to be working part time than men' (RCVS 2014, p. 3). Part-time work was spoken of as a strategic solution to the potential 'problem' of female reproduction, and the differential level of family responsibilities' (Lincoln, 2010, p.1971). In our study, the following account was very typical,

I'm part time now so I thought, "well yes, I'll do small animals three days a week"
(Female, SA Vet)

A shift to small animal work is only one consequence to arise from going part-time, another being confidence, already a problem for vets in general (Clarke & Knights, 2018),

I think going part-time for females is tough, really tough...you just don't remember stuff because you're not doing it as regularly...it drops your confidence, definitely; I feel less confident. (Female, SA vet)

This problem of part-time work is eschewed in the mainstream literature about veterinary work where the gendered domestic division of labour is disavowed. This tends to reinforce the view of vetting as a dead-end career for women, who cannot meet the masculine norms of long hours or 'chronic presenteeism' (Sheridan, 2004), where work is the single priority (a legacy of the male breadwinner syndrome), which then becomes a problem for the individual woman to manage,

I always thought, well there is a problem if a partner is a female, she becomes pregnant; is that a problem? I always thought that was possibly a problem, pay-wise and that
(Female, LA Vet)

Here in reproducing the assumption that 'the ideal worker' can only be 'a white man who is employed full time' (Desmarais & Alksnis, 2005, p.459), this vet sees herself as deviant insofar as pregnancy representing a *problem*,

I've obviously not been included in the partnership...I got told I was "too empathetic, I was too good a surgeon and my family were too important". June got told "she was too old.' (Female, SA vet)

Here, in typically masculine fashion, the organisation deflects responsibility for a failure to be offered a partnership back onto the employee (Newton, 1995), for the decision is centred on seemingly virtuous, but stereotypically feminine skills, that are turned against her. As yet, the feminisation of veterinary practices has not filtered through to the higher echelons, so hierarchical

inequality persists, where recruitment processes, rather than the 'gendered organization', is another avenue that can be blamed for the lack of advancement relating to females, (or girls),

I think we take the "wrong sort" of people into the profession. Now it's invariably white, middle class bright girls ...In this practice we have nine directors, all male. We have probably 20 odd assistants of which two are male (Male, Equine Partner)

This is precisely the problem that Williams (2014) raises in criticising the dominance of men at senior levels in the veterinary profession. While this vet accepts the problematic and gendered nature of organizing and promoting people, he is also complicit in reproducing, rather than challenging gendered practices. Here the same vet continues,

Of my clients 95% are female, and five per cent are gay. Pony club mums don't want to be told what to do by a 26-year-old girl. They like being told what to do by a bloke and our clients are a very sexist part of the profession ... our clients will phone up and go "I just want a bloke vet" (Male, Equine Partner)

At first sight, this could be read as a critique of clients' gendered practices, but even if this were the case, by colluding with client-centred and misogynistic views of female vets, the vet attempts to situate himself outside of these power-knowledge relations, and 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 2011). However, in complying with such requests to pacify clients' demands, he simply reinforces male superiority, dominance and even misogyny, as illustrated by the assumption 'they like being told what to do by a bloke'. In a similar vein, other male partners discursively constructed females in stereotypical ways,

the profession has gone from being male dominated to currently being female dominated. Invariably, the very intelligent young ladies that come out...don't really want to own a practice as such, because they might have a family at some point, three or four or five years down the line (Male, SA Partner)

There's a culture of long hours ...I think that perhaps a lot [are] not the primary breadwinner in the household. It means that they don't always aspire to run veterinary practices. (Male, LA Partner)

Such ideas about 'intelligent young ladies' were pervasive, particularly among male partners (the good boys), and for many women this means challenging the heroic 'masculine celebration of prowess' (Kondo, 1990, p. 259) regarding long working hours, together with organizational commitments that suppress home-life narratives (Thomas & Linstead, 2002, p.88). Apart from reinforcing the hegemony of heteronormativity (Riach et al., 2014), vets are perhaps unaware of reproducing this gendered binary (Knights, 2015), and equally unreflective about how men are often able to work long hours insofar as someone else (usually a woman) is assuming all child and elderly care as well as other domestic responsibilities. In these heteronormal circumstances, the importance of the woman's career is subordinated to her partners, and so men remain 'the main beneficiaries of the subordination of women' (Walby, 1990, p.3). Equally unreflective, and patronising was this observation from another male partner about future challenges,

One would be the amount of ladies qualifying. Because they go and have children, it becomes a very much part-time job after that, so it does alter the structure of the veterinary profession if 80% of those graduating are ladies (Male, SA Partner)

The disparaging use of ‘they go and have children’, illustrates how the ‘potential for maternity’ (Gatrell, 2008, p.5) and pregnancy sustains ‘one of the most prevalent sources of discrimination against women’ (Leifer, 1980, p.754). Despite embodying proof to the contrary, even female partners and vets with children reproduced the same homogenising discourse,

Women don’t want [partnership], they want to be able to leave and have babies
(Female, SA Partner)

you spend a lot of time at vet school, about five/six years, so for a female, by the time you get out you’re, after a couple of years you’re probably starting to think about a family....we’re brought up with mentality...I’m the main provider of childcare, but I wouldn’t want it any other way, to be honest, so that’s fine (Female, SA Vet)

One problem we have reported is how much gender disadvantage occurs because of familial norms and the unequal share of caring responsibilities experienced by women, but there are other ways of suffering, such as through self-policing, self-discipline and guilt that women find hard to escape from, given ‘the cultural legacy of subordinate status and an imbalance between care for others and care for the self’ (O’Grady, 2004, p. 9). Despite women outnumbering men in the profession, our female vets rarely acknowledged, let alone challenged or disrupted discourses of limitation, gender hierarchies, or any other aspect of the masculine culture of veterinary practice. Unfortunately, it is precisely ‘through acts of repetition and recitation [that] gender becomes ritualized, the effects of which make it appear natural’ (Riach, et al., 2014, p. 1681).

Conclusion

In writing about masculinity, it is important to reflect on how we ourselves do not stand outside our own gendered occupational practices, as there is a gendered ‘masculine legacy of science within organizational writing’ (Phillips et al. 2014, p.314; Gilmore et al., 2015), which feminist writing has sought to challenge (Harding et al., 2013). For this reason, and in order to practice what we preach, we have broken the convention of treating empirical findings as discrete from theoretical arguments and sought instead to interweave the two in presenting the research. Our argument is that when theory is presented as a discrete topic, usually in a discussion section, it is often a way of following a masculine procedure of elevating theory above the empirical material, whereas we subscribe to a view that their integration is what is most important.

In this article, we have drawn on a study of veterinary surgeons to illustrate how, despite appearances of zoocentric tendencies and the demographic feminization of the profession, vetting remains firmly organized around discourses and practices of anthropocentric masculinities. These involve control, mastery, domination and self-aggrandizement, which reflect and reproduce the ‘gendered organization’ (Pullen et al., 2017), while marginalising both non-human animal others, and female vets. In the empirical presentation, we have shown how organizational gendering within veterinary organizations occurs at all levels and across gender divides, some times openly and explicitly when male vets treat women’s biological reproduction as a problem for their practice. However, and perhaps more invidiously, it occurs covertly where the issue of gender is implicit in humanistic, anthropocentric or meritocratic beliefs about improvements in equal opportunity. Work intensification, long hours, presenteeism, male entitlement, unexamined gendered assumptions about women’s behaviour, the domestic division of labour, child and elderly care, and numerous other beliefs or assumptions prevail to sustain organizational gendering within the organization. We have implied that these ensure gender disadvantage remains institutionalized not only within the veterinary profession but also in society at large.

We argue that our article makes a contribution in combining issues of gender and anthropocentrism into what we call ‘Anthropocentric Masculinities’, which tend to be reinforced by most (though not all) vets unproblematically. The sub-titles in our empirical presentation regarding who is serving whom, and in what order, gives some clues as to our question of how masculinities and animal life intertwine in ways that reproduce oppressive systems of both anthropocentrism and patriarchy. Calvo’s concept of ‘anthroparchy’ refers to an amalgamation of both these terms to describe ‘a social system, a complex and relatively stable set of hierarchical relationships in which ‘nature’ is dominated through formations of social organization which privilege the human’ (Calvo, 2008; 1998; Cudworth 2011, 67, quoted in Cole and Stewart, 2018:1), but where this can be seen to conceptualise how ‘hierarchical relationships intersect with intra-human hierarchies, such that inequalities of gender, “race”, ethnicity, age, class, sexuality and so on are bound up with this domination of “nature” (Cole and Stewart, 2018:1)^v. In their study, they demonstrate how an Aldi advertisement promoting one of their meat products shows a daughter and her mother cooking on Father’s Day in a way that symbolically facilitates ‘the performance of patriarchal gender relations, gendered parent-child interactions, and heteronormativity’ (ibid: 6). Here and elsewhere, anthropocentric masculinities reinforce an ideology of anthroparchy to ensure that the human-animal is always primary, even when zoocentric behaviour appears to imply otherwise, reproducing taken for granted assumptions of ‘that’s just the way it is’ (de Fontenay, p.52). Where ethical dilemmas arise, such as in convenience euthanasia, anthropocentric discourses of ownership ensure that any ‘competition’ between the wishes of the client frequently trump those relating to the ‘welfare’ of the animal.

Through this we have explored how human-animal and non-human animal relationships are embedded in deeply gendered masculine humanistic assumptions of control and hierarchical privilege, whereby even those who swear an oath to the animal, continue to ensure *the human-animal is served first and foremost*. We have also sought to illustrate how masculine behaviour and

practices are elevated in the veterinary profession, with the effect of marginalising non-human animals. Despite the growing numbers of female vets, these practices are reflected in gendered asymmetries of rewards in terms of credibility, pay, promotion and status. This ensures that it is the 'good boys' who achieve both material and non-material recognition while the 'clever and intelligent young ladies' in our study whether administrators or vets are often merely supportive.

We recognise that like all studies, our research has limitations^{vi}. First, we researched first-opinion vets in private practice, who form only one part of the profession, whereas vets practice in a variety of other settings such as specialist hospitals, zoos, and slaughterhouses, to name but a few. A second limitation, but also an interesting development for future research, would be to draw from a more diverse range of voices in any future studies, to include clients, veterinary receptionists and nurses, specifically to explore more directly how they contribute to the gendered nature of animal care. Historically, it is highly likely that the gendered and subordinated work of veterinary receptionists and nurses is one way that the binaries between a feminised notion of care/emotional labour^{vii} and the masculine dominance of vets was established, and is now maintained.

While this study may seem narrowly focused on veterinary practice, it has other substantial implications for professional (and other) work more broadly. In terms of feminisation, we believe that our research reflects similarities with what is happening in other occupations, including but not confined to, school teachers, prison officers, dentists, medics and academics, who may present similar gender demographics. We believe that statistics regarding fewer gender imbalances within professions should be treated cautiously, for it is not just a matter of equal opportunity for women or minorities at the point of entry. Perhaps it is equally if not more important to challenge the masculine processes, gendered and racial organizing and the male-dominated hierarchies as well as how these are intricately linked to anthroparchic humanist assumptions regarding veterinary work. In addition, and particularly relevant to those professions (e.g. medicine, dentistry, the food

industry) that make laudatory and virtuous claims concerning care and control on the back of humanistic (and often anthropocentric) beliefs, the application of posthumanist ideas show how predominantly able-bodied white, masculine practices merely preserve, and render opaque, the way humans (particularly males) always come to be served first.

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i The owners of traditional veterinary practices are called Partners.

ii Although one vet did not permit extending the research to others in his practice largely because he was convinced that we were being funded by the drugs industry.

iii LA means Large Animal vet, SA means Small Animal vet and EQ means Equine vet

iv We are aware, of course, of the converse of this when it comes to the death of humans described as the 'unethical posture that is dysthanasia' (Monteiro, 2016, p. 408), where in the name of humanism, the prolongation of human life is disproportionate to the person's own desire, let alone the burden to the individuals and institutions that care for them.

v They provide evidence of these intersections through researching commercial adverts where cooking non-human animal meat is linked specifically to masculinity, heteronormativity and the subordinate position of women (Cole and Stewart, 2018: 5)

vi We thank Reviewer 2 for helping us to appreciate these avenues for future studies

vii We attribute this phrase to Reviewer 2