

Position *through* triangle Δ^2

Written Response

Kumi Sakai

Index

Introduction (321words)

My lines of enquiry

The reason to chose pigs

The analysis of the reference (753words)

Outline

Key Elements

Language

Style

Enacts

Media

What could I learn from the reference?

Bibliography

Wallén, M 2022, *Design Activism Challenging the Speciesist Upbringing of Children*, Master thesis, Linköping University, Linköping, viewed 30 Oct 2023, <<https://liu.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1701206&dswid=-9908>>.

Introduction

My lines of enquiry

The topic in the previous term was about the possibilities of expressing emotional complexity through typeface design. Since the main feedback was that I should narrow the target and topic specifically, I decided to focus on complex feelings when people eat meat nowadays.

I started thinking about what I could do as a graphic designer for animals. I am currently not vegan/vegetarian and eat meat a few times per week. However, I sometimes feel guilty about eating meat as if I were a murderer and think about stopping eating meat to protect animal's life. Even so, I still cannot stop eating meat to take protein and enjoy meals and struggle with the controversial feelings.

Therefore, my line of enquiry is: Can meat-eaters be animal rights advocates? and how does design activism work for this issue?

The reason to chose pigs

I decided to analyse only pigs, even if the animal abuse is related to all human products, such as cosmetics tested by animal experiments and fashion materials like wool and leather. It is because eating is the most fundamental activity for us as carnivores. It is easy to say that humans are animals and carnivores, so we have the right to kill and eat other animals like lions. However, it is a fact that we 'produce' animals at factory farms and ignore they used to have life when we consume them.

In addition, the reason why I chose pigs, not cows and hens, was that each animal has a different context from humans. For example, regarding cows, humans drink their milk, not only eat their meat. And humans decided to reduce their consumption from the aspect of environmental problems. As a result, I decided to aim for research that was as narrow and deep as possible to analyse only pigs which is the most widely eaten meat in the world (36%) in 2023 according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

The analysis of the reference

Outline

This thesis is about Design Activism Challenging the Speciesist Upbringing of Children, written in 2022 by Matilda Wallen, a graphic designer and vegan activist.

The author summarises how people have treated other animals throughout history and considers how she can contribute to animal rights in the style of design activism. One of the characteristic points of this thesis is the target audience which is people involved in educational relatives for raising children to update human's common sense in the long term.

Key Elements

Meat Paradox

One of the main themes of this project is the gap between the unpleasant guilt feelings while eating meat and the behaviour to continue to eat meat, which is called "The Meat Paradox". The main factor of this issue is the activities that marketing has separated meat production and consumption. The modern meat industry has reduced evocative cues that remind consumers of the living conditions, slaughter process and the meaning of 'farming'. However, at the same time, this contradiction is widening as people have become more ethically aware of animal rights.

Absent Referent

"Absent Referent" is the word used to show that the meat industry separated animal lives from products instinctively. This mechanism is hidden in various places, such as calling animals as livestock, poultry, and farm animals. The slaughter process is also hidden from the beautiful package design. I found one interesting fact even if illustrations of anthropomorphic animals are drawn on instant noodle packages, people do not think about eating them. This is due to the animals being presented in Absent Referent.

Happy Cow

To reduce their guilt, people tend to wish that the animals were raised on an idyllic farm to have a good time with special care. The packaging often features photos of animals freely grazing on pasture in response to their wish. However, this tendency only deepens the gap between factory farms and people's image of idyllic farms.

The analysis of the reference

Dichotomy

The root of this issue is the dichotomy between humans and non-human animals. Historically, it has been thought that only humans have immortal souls, can use tools, form societies, organise thoughts, reflect, deal with ethics and planning, and feel empathy. However, current research shows that all these traits can be seen in other animals as well. Therefore, humans draw borders between themselves and other animals because it is convenient only for humans.

Categorise

People categorise animals into three types: pets, farm animals, and wild animals. As a result, people are physiologically unable to eat dog meat but can mentally safely eat beef. Humans have no right to categorise other animals as they see fit, so we must reconsider how we can change our recognition.

Language

The author is considering how radical the language used in Design Activism should be. For example, if we treat people and animals as completely equal, we might call farmers slaveholders or call slaughter as murder. However, the author does not communicate in this context to avoid too radical an approach. Instead, she uses she/he/they as subjects for animals and words to show their lives, not using words as edibles. This is the same as my position.

Style

The style of this project is design activism for animal rights. Additionally, the author cares about 'Changing without being radical.' I would like to consider what should be done to effectively communicate about animal rights through design to aim for a better society

The analysis of the reference

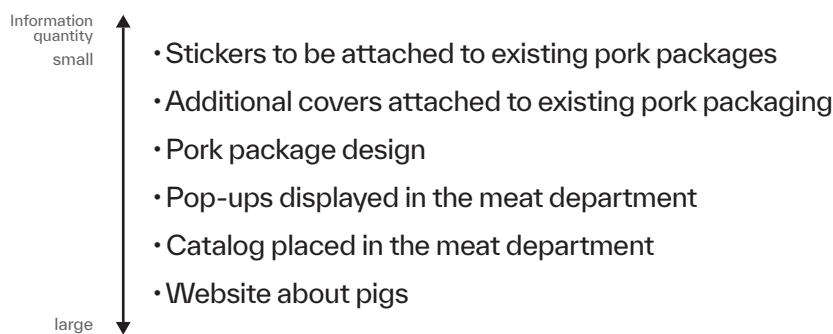
Enacts

Through this reference, I could sort out the elements required for the media I will produce.

- Conveying the whereabouts of animals' lives - should be the opposite of Absent Referent
- Do not separate Consume and Production
- Do not hide the facts with design
- Avoid exaggerating expressions of an Idyllic farm.
- Think about how to convey the similarities between humans and non-human animals

Media

Through this research, I have updated the list of media for design production in this project as follows. It is divided into six categories depending on the amount of information. Through each media, the aim is to update consumers' ethical views on meat and to provide them with an opportunity to feel the gratitude that is appropriate for eating life.



What could I learn from the reference?

Since this project was approached from a close perspective, I learned a wide range of issues related to animal rights that I needed to know about, and it was also helpful in learning how to enact my perspective specifically.