

## **Unstable Mixtures: Zooethnographic Educational Relations as Difference, Contagion, Critique, and Potential**

Helena Pedersen  
Malmö University, Sweden

**Abstract** *This essay approaches educational alternatives from a specific case study: an unrealised student project, designed as an unconventional ethnographic/ethological field study with pigs in a commercial slaughter swine facility. I begin with an interview-based account of the student's own version of what happened with her project proposal in the process that led to its final disapproval by her university. Then I provide a speculative scenario, created as the not-yet-realised possibility of the project and outlined as if it had been carried out. In the end I discuss different meanings "education" takes on in the two accounts and ask how species-, scientific-, and ethical difference may come together as organisers of education theory and practice affecting both humans and animals. The essay suggests that an analysis ending not with conventional, evidence-based research "results," but rather with an "unstable mixture" (Bergen, 2010) of actual events and unrealised educational possibilities, creates a space to critically rethink institutional, intersubjective, and interspecies educational relationships.*

**Keywords** activism, indeterminacy, ethology, knowledge production, pigs

### **Introduction: Exploring Educational Alternatives Through "The Animal Condition"**

In this essay I present and explore a student project that has not yet been realised, since it was disapproved by the student's university in its early planning phase. The project is designed as an ethnographic/ethological field study with pigs at a commercial slaughter swine production site. While I will look into the circumstances around the rejection of the project, my purpose in this essay is not primarily to confront and critique institutional structures and conventions that have led to its prevention, but to circumvent them and point to alternative ways of thinking about animals and education. In order to do so, I will myself circumvent

Helena Pedersen  
Malmö University, Sweden  
Helena.Pedersen@mah.se

scientific conventions and generate a speculative scenario<sup>1</sup> based on a semi-structured interview with the ethology student (“Emma”) and previous research in human-animal studies. In the scenario I envision how Emma’s project could have turned out, and what possibilities for knowledge production it could have opened. I will use these speculations to ask how various layers of difference – species, scientific, ethical – may come together as organisers of education theory and practice affecting both humans and animals. I will also address the critical potential embedded in such an educational space.

We will thus follow a university student, “Emma,” who is also an animal rights activist, preparing her BSc thesis project in ethology. I will delineate the background to Emma’s project, her own story about the processes behind its disapproval, and her final carrying out of the project in a not-yet-realised scenario, which I have interpreted as an explorative process ontology of interspecies educational relations. Emma’s research questions are as follows:

What kind of relations between pigs and humans can be developed in an environment conditioned by the instrumental position of pigs as “production animals” in contemporary society? How can a human enter a collectivity of other species, a “herd” of pigs in a crate under these conditions, share their life and daily routines, and begin communicating about common matters such as the allocation of food and resting places within the herd? What do the material and social life conditions offered by modern farming do to the individual held in captivity in this production system? (Interview transcript). The method Emma has chosen to empirically explore these research questions is to “move into” a pig crate in a commercial slaughter swine facility and live together with the pigs under their conditions, 24 hours a day, during approximately one month. This plan was finally rejected by Emma’s university.

In-between Emma’s project plans and its unrealised possibilities emerges a space of indeterminacy conflating “the actual” and “the virtual.” Viewed alongside Bergen’s account of Deleuzian politics, “the actual” and “the virtual” are not to be seen as separate, but as forming an “unstable mixture” (Bergen, 2010, p. 39) that works to re-stage the given. In the end, it generates a critical question addressing the “animal condition”<sup>2</sup> and the alternatives it evokes for education.

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<sup>1</sup> Scenario development is a futures studies method of investigating and comparing different possible futures and to create grounds for making better decisions about matters that have long-term future consequences (May, 1996). My primary purpose with the scenario developed in the present essay is, however, slightly different: to create a space for thinking about educational alternatives in the absence of empirical “data.” Also, I build the scenario on a student interview and previous research, rather than on futures studies methods such as environmental scanning and cross-impact analysis.

<sup>2</sup> “[T]he actual life situation of most nonhuman animals in human society and culture, as physically and emotionally experienced with its routine repertoire of violence, deprivation, desperation, agony, apathy, suffering, and death.” (Pedersen & Stănescu, 2012, p.ix)

### **Background: The “Pig Crate Project” Design**

The curriculum of the undergraduate ethology programme Emma is enrolled in includes a BSc thesis project independently planned, designed, and conducted by the student. According to the written project guidelines disseminated to the students by the university department, the thesis project can take the form of a literature study, an investigation, or an experimental project scientifically exploring an ethological problem identified and chosen by the student. Emma, an animal rights activist, enrolled in the ethology programme with the explicit intention of contributing to change (interview transcript). From her perspective, this means transforming, in particular, the life situation of animals held in captivity by humans. In other words, she hopes to bring about concrete change in the actual conditions under which so-called production animals are most urgently suffering, as one of many possible ways of achieving the ultimate goal of ending animal oppression altogether. To Emma, this strategy entails three major paths: A step-by-step influencing of present animal welfare legislation, of peoples’ attitudes toward animals, and of the conditions under which the animals are kept (Interview transcript).

Thus, to Emma, the scientific process of thinking about her thesis project sets out from these three necessary prerequisites. In her project proposal outline, she makes careful attempts to align her research design to her department’s requirements. Her project idea is to carry out an experimental field study project of “moving into” a crate in a commercial slaughter swine facility and living together with the pigs under their conditions, 24 hours a day, during approximately one month. She estimates that her project will require quite a large amount of preparatory theoretical research, and, during her time in “the field,”<sup>3</sup> she will use a video camera for recording her interactions with the pigs, to make subsequent analyses of the process possible (Project proposal outline). With her project, she wants to make a “statement,” that is, bring people’s attention to the problems of animal production and challenge how we, as humans, think about other animals as compared to how we think about ourselves. Aware of the strategic significance of making such parallels in animal rights work, Emma wants to gain first-hand empirical insight into exactly how she as a human being experiences the lived reality of slaughter swine confinement (Interview transcript).

Emma’s proposal outlines three different theoretical approaches to her field study that structure her thinking and summarise her scientific aims with the project. As she emphasises in her proposal, these three approaches actually follow, and even have the same names as, major modules in the ethology programme: The ethological approach, the anthrozoological approach, and the animal welfare

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<sup>3</sup> The ethnographic notion of “the field” becomes problematic in the present case. Whether it is appropriate to call the severely confined conditions of a commercial pig crate (approximately 3 x 3 m<sup>2</sup>) a “field” of empirical studies can be discussed.

approach. I will give a brief account of each of these, as Emma herself elaborates on them in her written project proposal as well as in my interview with her.

The “ethology approach” focuses on co-habitation as ethological method. Inspired by the primatologist Jane Goodall, Emma wants to live not with wild chimpanzees but with farmed pigs, become part of their life in their present environment as a way of producing new knowledge about them, and in the end, evaluating the validity of the method.<sup>4</sup> The method entails an acceptance of the ethological researcher not as independent and objective in relation to her study, but as a subjective and entangled part of it. An added dimension to this approach (although not explicitly stated in her project proposal) is that Emma wishes to challenge the status hierarchy she feels is embedded in the very different social positions allocated to wild animals and domestic animals, respectively. In her experience, there is “contempt” toward farmed animals within the community of animal scientists, placing, for instance, wolves higher than cows on the value scale and thereby making wolf research considerably “cooler” than research on cows (Interview transcript). Therefore, applying the research method of a famous primatologist (Goodall) to the situation of slaughter swine might begin to break down and call into question these social-scientific boundaries and conceptions.

Emma’s second theoretical approach is the “anthrozoology approach.” This approach primarily addresses the question of how humans and pigs function together, what type of “herd” they can compose when they are actually living together, and what types of relation a human can develop with pigs. Here, focus lies on human-pig interactive activities, and Emma’s role in the herd. How will she become accepted, how will the pigs behave toward her, and how will Emma herself behave in relation to them? How do they communicate about common matters, such as the allocation of food and resting places? This approach also includes a biological and historical literature study on pigs, humans, and their interactions: How have they evolved together, how have they lived, and how *can* they live together? (Interview transcript and project proposal).

The third theoretical approach of Emma’s proposed thesis project is the “animal welfare approach.” This is intended to be a personal narrative about life in a pig crate from direct experience from “the floor” by someone who can tell the story that the pigs themselves cannot. What is it like for a social and intelligent mammal with great needs for environmental enrichment and stimulation to live in the environment offered to slaughter swine by modern farming? What does continuous inactivity, sleeping on a concrete floor, being fed nothing but pellets three times a day do to an

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<sup>4</sup> This does not suggest that co-habitation with pigs in a crate for a month will provide the *same* kind of data that living with chimpanzees for many years in the wild will provide; the latter approach profoundly differing in character and being well beyond the limits of a BSc thesis project. Emma’s project is rather to be viewed as a partial zooethnography inspired by Goodall as an alternative to conventional ethological research design.

individual? (Emma planned to go through a medical and perhaps even a psychological screening prior to and after her study.) Here, Emma wants to address what she calls “our common baseline,” that is, all parallels that exist between pigs and humans with regard to their evolutionary background, social organisation, mental capacity, physiology, and natural needs. For instance, pigs and humans are both omnivorous mammals with similar body weight, both are inquisitive, active animals who sleep eight hours and work (keep themselves busy) eight hours per day. With the human-porcine “common baseline” as the framework making it possible to draw parallels between pig and human perception, Emma will explore from her own personal experience what is worst about life in the crate. Is it when all the lamps in the facility suddenly are lit? Is it to get the same kind of food every day? Is it that you never know when someone will come and take away some of your crate-mates for slaughter? Or is the worst thing all the fighting within the herd and competition about the food? Emma hopes that her study can give new and more detailed insights into as yet unthought dimensions of pigs’ experiences that would otherwise be difficult to obtain, even for experienced pig researchers who have spent their whole lives studying pigs (Interview transcript and project proposal).

### **Disapproval of the “Pig Crate Project”: Emma’s Story**

In my interview with Emma, she describes her experiences of what happened when she proposed her pig crate project idea to her university department. What follows is a summary of her story.<sup>5</sup> As Emma first approaches one of the professors, he gives his tentative support. When addressing the concern whether a study such as this, based on qualitative instead of quantitative data, can be considered “scientific” or not within a framework of natural science conventions, the professor responds positively that it can be viewed as a deep interview or a case study. After this encouraging initial support, Emma approaches her academic advisor for approval, who, in turn, checks around with some of her close colleagues as well as the dean. From previous contacts with the dean, whose personal attitudes to animals Emma has experienced are far from her own animal rights position, Emma already knows that she cannot expect any support from him, and as she predicted, he stops her plans.

Emma does not speak in person with the dean, but receives his decision via her advisor. One of the formal reasons for rejection, as Emma understands it, is that the department is not willing to cover the costs involved in the ethics review procedure

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<sup>5</sup> This summary is subjective and incomplete as it only represents the student perspective, i.e., Emma’s own version of what happened. In order to get a more comprehensive picture of the process, university faculty would have been interviewed as well. Although the bias in my empirical material may be viewed as a methodological shortcoming, I want to emphasise that focus lies on the unrealised potentialities of Emma’s project, rather than on a full and accurate description of the interactions and processes that led to its disapproval.

that Emma's particular project would ostensibly require. Another reason is that it is doubtful whether this project will fulfill the requirements of scientific quality. When Emma argues that her project could be viewed as analogous to what in the humanities would be conceptualised as a deep interview with the pigs, her advisor responds that the department does not have the necessary competence in supervising a thesis project outside the framework of the natural sciences. To Emma, this raises a concern that her project might not qualify for an ethology degree.<sup>6</sup> This concern, coupled with the suspicion that her project proposal will not be accepted by her department regardless of its scientific quality, Emma resigns, since she also relies on department support in order to find a suitable pig farm where she can conduct her study. She decides to drop her pig crate project idea and change her plans to a more conventional and acceptable thesis project.<sup>7</sup>

### **Realisation of the “Pig Crate Project”: A Speculative Scenario**

While the above outline is partial (delimited to describing Emma's story of what happened), the scenario that follows is purely hypothetical since I will delineate possible developments of the project plan Emma has not yet had an opportunity to realise. In this particular sense, my scenario resembles scenario creation in futures studies as “a postulated sequence of future events” (Tulloch, 1993, quoted in May, 1996, p. 161). My only basis for these sequences of possible future events is Emma's project plan and the ideas surrounding it as they emerged in my interview with her. The scenario is thus developed in the absence of empirical data: I have no ethnographic material from actual interaction between Emma and the pigs; no material that would have represented her planned “deep interview” with the pigs or the phenomenological case study of her life together with them. Thus, I have to find other sources of inspiration for the development of this scenario. Among these sources of inspiration are Despret (2004; 2008), Hultman & Lenz Taguchi (2010), Lenz Taguchi (in press) and Smuts (2001). (I emphasise that I use each of these studies as guidelines, not as methodological models.) The scenario that now follows is, again, purely hypothetical:

After some initial struggle, and with significant support from the sympathetic professor, the dean finally changes his mind about Emma's proposed thesis project and gives it his approval. With the help of her department faculty, Emma establishes contacts with a commercial pig producer. The producer welcomes Emma as a student researcher to his animal facilities, convinced about the high quality level of his animal welfare standards and the general production environment provided at his farm, and looking forward to the positive research

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<sup>6</sup> While these are formal motivations for the rejection of Emma's proposed project, she believes that there is an implicit reason as well, based on a concern about the department's scientific reputation that could be jeopardised if her project was approved of.

<sup>7</sup> See Pedersen (2011a) for an ethnographic account of Emma's new project.

results he hopes will be disseminated by Emma's study and help strengthening a favourable public image of his farm (cf. Arluke & Sanders, 1996). Facing a dilemma of research ethics, Emma does not reveal her overarching animal advocacy agenda behind her fieldwork to the farmer, choosing instead to foreground her "ethology approach" and her "anthrozoology approach," while keeping silent about the third dimension of her study, the "animal welfare approach."

After getting all necessary formal permissions, having gone through a routine medical screening, and doing preparatory research on human-pig differences and similarities in terms of evolutionary biology, social organisation, mental capacities, physiology and natural needs (project proposal outline), Emma finally moves in with a group of nine pigs,<sup>8</sup> carefully selected by the farmer and housed in one of the crates at his swine production facilities. (As can be expected, the pigs are not asked for their permission of receiving a new crate-mate. As with most other events in their short lives, this just happens to them as an unavoidable fact.) Emma's entrance takes place shortly after the transition phase from the "grower pen" to the "finishing pen," that is, when the pigs are three months old with a body weight of around 30 kg.<sup>9</sup> (By the end of the month, however, the pigs will have outgrown Emma in terms of body size.) The process of Emma's moving in is quite smooth. During her initial minutes in the crate, the pigs respond with expressions of fear toward her; then curiosity takes over as they begin to explore the presence of the unfamiliar creature now sharing their confined living space. As Emma installs herself in the crate, it becomes obvious that the limited space provided makes it impossible to keep a distinct physical species separation, and, gradually, cross-species interaction begins to develop. Despite her long experience as an animal rights activist and of living with animals in her home (interview transcript), Emma now finds herself in a situation where she is not only a visitor to the pigs' confined lifeworld, but also, in an educational sense of the word, a "beginner" (Biesta, 2006, p. 49). Who are these pigs? What is important to them? What are their frustrations, their fears, their occasional sources of joy?

The new assemblage starting to take shape the day Emma enters the crate is not, of course, an assemblage of equals, nor does it suddenly come into being "from scratch" on this very moment. Like all human-animal interrelations, also this one is marked by historical-material experiences and conditions of human-porcine shared existence, and contains within it the sum of all previous encounters between pig and human (cf. Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010), with its entire repertoire of

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<sup>8</sup> A group size of 10 individuals is common practice in Swedish slaughter swine production; however, it happens quite frequently that a pig dies, hence the fictitious assemblage in this scenario is composed of nine pigs plus the research student/activist Emma (informal discussion with Emma, Sept. 19, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> This transition phase is a suitable moment for Emma's crate entrance since it is common to mix pig individuals from different groups at this time. Moreover, the pigs are transferred to a new space that is nobody's territory (informal discussion with Emma, Sept. 19, 2011).

domestication, interdependence, domination, stress, affection, abuse, agony, suffering, and slaughter. (To a pig in the pork production system, her short relation with humans is predetermined to end with her being slaughtered, whereas from the human-supremacist perspective, human “relationship” with the pig will always extend post-mortem into the consumption of her flesh.) Thus, the assemblage is not ahistorical, and Emma’s presence in the crate becomes a bearer and reminder of these multiple previous events, as well as a bearer of the heavy responsibilities they entail. These include, above all, the ultimate responsibility of providing relief, liberation, and life rather than confinement and slaughter – if not to her particular crate-mates, then at least in the long run to their successors and offspring. Similarly, the particular crate Emma enters, as a distinct materially demarcated living space for the pigs (and, temporarily, for herself) and as an equally sharply discursive manifestation of human control over pig life, is not an isolated unit but embedded in a complexity of institutional relationships; overlapping and connecting with numerous politico-economic institutions such as animal science, agricultural management, cultural heritage, family traditions, global capital, and – with Emma’s entrance – education. These interconnecting and overlapping apparatuses coordinate the organisation of interspecies life in the crate and collectively compose and modulate the potential “we” that may emerge (cf. Despret, 2008) as an effect of such co-habitation during one month.

Gradually, it becomes clear to Emma that not only her crate-mates, but the three different research approaches she has formulated to guide her fieldwork – the ethological approach, the anthrozoological approach, and the animal welfare approach – work on her with different intensity and effect. Initially, her focus is on “the anthrozoological approach” in order to get accepted by the herd and try to create a situation where it will actually be practically possible to lead a shared life with the pigs for a month. Being in the crate together entails developing an understanding of the invisible boundaries defining the personal space for each individual, learning whom to approach and whom to avoid, learning their specific rhythms, their habits, their semiotics – and how to attune to them (cf. Despret, 2004; Smuts, 2001). All ethological questions have to be subordinated to these basic conditions of interaction. Soon, however, Emma’s “animal welfare approach” takes over with excruciating force of direct somatic experience, obscuring her ability to concentrate at all on “scientific” research. Lack of sleep, hygiene, physical exercise, fresh air, varied nourishment,<sup>10</sup> and all forms of ordinary daily life activities and their subtle shifts and variations, quickly overshadows all ambitions of ethological knowledge-production, rendering them profoundly irrelevant. Although no external pain is inflicted on Emma, she finally experiences a spatial disintegration of her

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<sup>10</sup> Lack of variation in feed taste and texture can lead to decreased interest in the feed, a familiar phenomenon particularly among older hogs (informal discussion with Emma, Sept. 19, 2011).

world reminiscent of that of a tortured subject: A contraction of the universe down to the immediate vicinity of her body, and her body swelling to fill the entire universe (Scarry, 1985). The crate, at first a setting for intended ethological fieldwork, then a space for relation-forming, finally consumes everything in it that is life-affirming and transforms it into a total denial of any possibility of shared existence. Habitation in the crate becomes reduced to a life of quiet desperation (Wemelsfelder, 2003).

There are still some remnants, however, of Emma's anthrozoological approach toward the end of the month, although Emma ultimately has to modify her research question in light of her experiences. The questions "How do humans and pigs function together? What type of 'herd' can they compose when they are actually living together, and what types of relation can a human develop with pigs?" need rethinking as she realises that her field study has no answer to offer about what types of relations "a human" can develop "with pigs," but has with all the more clarity shown her what types of relations *this* activist-student can develop with these particular pig individuals under the given material, political and social circumstances in which they find themselves. Thus, there are no generic representatives of either activists, students, ethologists-in-the-making, nor pigs involved here (cf. Despret, 2008), only a temporary assemblage of affecting and affected subjects with differently (but overlapping) transforming personalities, behaviours, and sensations.<sup>11</sup> Among them, co-habitation in the confinement of the crate becomes an undetermined experience disintegrating and splitting up not only their minds and bodies, but their entire worlds (cf. Despret, 2004).

### **Animals In-between Knowledge Regimes**

What constitutes "knowledge" about nonhuman animals? It would be all too easy to make a sharp distinction between two different forms of knowledge production here: on the one hand, an institutionally validated and authorised "official" scientific, presumably evidence-based knowledge, and on the other hand, a form of "embedded," phenomenological knowledge emerging from intersubjective relationships in the temporary sharing of lifeworlds. It would, however, be premature to draw this distinction. Emma identifies herself as an animal rights activist, but she is also an aspiring ethologist, needing scientific facts to support her animal advocacy work. The "common baseline" she refers to when analysing human-pig similarities is based on biological and ethological research, rather than on phenomenological insight. However, to Emma, regardless of how much she needs this ethological evidence, it is *incomplete* in telling the pigs' story. It is incomplete in the sense that there are aspects of the pigs' life that conventional

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<sup>11</sup> This does not invalidate certain generalisations to the situation of other pigs living under similar conditions in the production system.

scientific knowledge does not have access to *unless you as a researcher experience these dimensions yourself*. This point is perhaps best illustrated by Emma's own words. In the interview transcript that follows, she describes the content of an article she read, written by an agronomist student, who has studied lying and rising behaviours in dairy cows:

When cows lie down, as compared to for instance dogs and horses who lie down with their rear first, cows lie down with the front part of their body first. So, they sort of fall forward on their forelegs, knees first. And... yes, they fall with a weight of around 7-800 kg on their knees. And if they do this outside on a soft meadow, it is no problem, but if they do it on a concrete floor, it really is [a problem]. And she [the article author] said, imagine falling on your knees on a concrete floor, 20 times a day, and imagine that you weigh 10 times as much [as you do]. [...] I hadn't thought about this. I had understood that it's hard lying on the floor and that it's hard walking on the floor and that there are problems with their hoofs, but I have never thought about that they fall down [...], fall on their knees, sort of. You can do that outside on a lawn, but you don't do it on asphalt. Because it hurts. And they weigh a lot more. And they have to do it, it's a biological need because they have to be able to lie down and ruminate. If they can't ruminate... yes, it's entirely crucial. And to sleep. (Excerpt from interview transcript)

Direct, phenomenological experience will thus not replace conventional ethological knowledge about pigs in commercial pork production; nor will it render it less interesting or useful. It will, rather, add to it, strengthen it. It will result in a "double articulation" of knowledge about pigs, drawing its persuasive power from the two different realms that produced it. It is in this double articulation, the merging of two different knowledge forms, that the core idea of Emma's project is located. Her formal education, however, is not, it seems, prepared to accommodate her knowledge aspirations. It makes different claims on knowledge acquisition and on the human-animal relationships it relies on. Emma's project sits awkwardly in the intersection of different knowledge regimes, in a place too peripheral to be comfortably incorporated in institutional identity work. It can, however, be argued that the boundaries between these knowledge regimes are as porous, fluid, and in a constant state of transition as the human-animal boundary work on which they depend (and contribute to nurture): At any given moment, the boundaries may appear ontologically fixed and immutable to change, but recognition of their historical and political constructedness will direct attention to the various ways knowledge forms rely on each other in ceaseless processes of mutual exchange.

As the university disapproves of Emma's pig crate project proposal, it also misses out on a possibility to open up a realm of knowledge that bears a potential for change in perception about what constitutes ethology education, and, in a wider meaning, what constitutes education about "production" animals. The institutional moves, as described in Emma's story above, significantly inhibit the space available to students in formulating independent research questions. They risk fixing both student and animal to their previously assigned positions as reproducers of scientific and material-economic value in agribusiness and its affiliated system of knowledge development. As a form of professional socialisation into scientific conventions, these moves are at least temporarily effective as they stopped Emma's project and directed her toward an (ostensibly) less controversial ethological field study (a so-called "cognitive bias" experiment with hens, a project already initiated by Emma's co-advisor). Viewed from a critical pedagogical perspective, the institutional response to Emma's project proposal delimits the possibilities to produce knowledge different from, as well as to produce knowledge differently, than established and legitimised knowledge forms and knowledge-making. However, to expect that Emma's involuntary shift from her initial project plan to her new one would imply her total adherence to institutional-discursive norms would be, as shown by the way in which she immerses herself in her "new" project, to underestimate both her developing independence as knowledge producer about, with, and for animals, as well as the power of her overarching activist agenda and her change agency (see Pedersen, 2011a).

### **Sharing Suffering?**

The educational implications of Emma's project are deeply contingent on the definition of "field" in the word "fieldwork"; its essential characteristic being that, to the researcher, it is possible to get out of it, while for the research subjects, the field *is* their world, not a temporary setting (Pedersen, 2011b). Thus, Emma will not be sent to slaughter together with her porcine crate-mates. It is her "human" privilege to escape this fate. She will, if necessary, receive medical care after her month in the pig crate, and get back to her ordinary life shortly afterwards. This means that the educational message implied in the fantasy of "sharing suffering" with nonhuman animals, a notion that has recently attracted attention as a subject of analysis in some strands of animal studies (e.g., Haraway, 2008; Porcher, 2011) is problematic. If "shared suffering" means a direct experience largely corresponding to the lived situation and sensations of animals bred for institutionalised slaughter, the notion of "sharing" surely has its clear delimitations. The human worker (and the ethology researcher) in sites of animal production normally is in a position to control her exposure to the situation of suffering, including its duration and intensity, or at least has an option to "go home" after the working day (or field

study period) instead of being killed (cf. Noske, 1997).<sup>12</sup> The educational dimension of the pig crate project scenario rather lies in having one's prospects of *becoming* (becoming-ethologist, becoming-pig, becoming-pig-rescuer) disabled and cut off as the barren material environment works indiscriminately upon everybody in the crate with equal intensity. In the process, the philosophical ideal of education as creating open-ended ways of coming into the world (Biesta, 2006) is displaced by the question of for *whom* the world is at all a desirable place to enter.

Within the divergent meanings of education explored in this essay – education as the administration of formally approved knowledge, versus education as a process of created, disrupted and reconfigured possibilities of “becoming” (a process that is educational even in its denial or negation of these possibilities) – the image of knowledge about animals also takes on different meanings and does different work. If the main epistemological question here is, “What does it mean to make knowledge claims about a particular animal, a group of animals, or an animal species, what limits and positions do these knowledge claims transcend or create, and what is their ultimate purpose?,” then the *educational* question can be asked, “How are different knowledge claims about animals articulated by education, how are animals and humans affected by them, and what does education become when constituted by such knowledge claims?”

### **Afterword: Unstable Mixtures and Critique**

The “animal condition” (Pedersen & Stănescu, 2012) works in and through education in particular ways. It partly transforms the notion of “difference” to a blatant euphemism, ending up as a regime of species-coded hierarchy setting limits for animal and human becoming and organising scientific and institutional praxis. It is, however, a hierarchy that is not altogether stable and uniform. Within its framework, complex layers of species, scientific, and ethical *difference* keep on reassembling to produce indeterminate educational outcomes. It means the educational space is conditioned by temporary assemblages and interconnections between these differences (and the subjects emerging through them). In this essay I have sought to delineate just such an educational space that enables critique by “insecuring” research data: The tensions and passages between the prevention of Emma’s project and its unrealised potentialities accommodate an opportunity to rethink educational relationships (institutional, interpersonal, interspecies). Thus, the conflation of the actual and the virtual forms an “unstable mixture” in Emma’s project, finding expression in, for instance, a contagion between natural science and social science knowledge production, as well as a contagion between academia and activism.

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<sup>12</sup> For a different perspective on this comparison, see Patterson (2002).

As I “take over” Emma’s proposed (but unrealised) thesis project to produce a piece of education research, I also appropriate its open-endedness and point to what it might have become. This is, in a particular sense, a violent move; an attempt to create meaning out of an imaginary process and “fix” it in conceptual space. Herein resides a profound paradox: In order to “insecure” research data, it has to constantly be attached to new positions. To research the open-ended character of education, we enclose it in meaning and purpose. However, this apparent closure, as it is produced by this particular case study, also generates a question that opens up *another* space for thinking about education, animals, and knowledge. I refer to the question stated above: “How are different knowledge claims about animals articulated by education, how are animals and humans affected by them, *and what does education become when constituted by such knowledge claims?*” Let us put this question to theoretical and practical work through our education system, to make a difference for humans and animals alike.

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### Author Details

Helena Pedersen is a Research Fellow at Malmö University. Contact address: Faculty of Education and Society, Department of Science, Environment and Society, Malmö University, SE-205 06 Malmö, Sweden. E-mail: Helena.Pedersen@mah.se

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