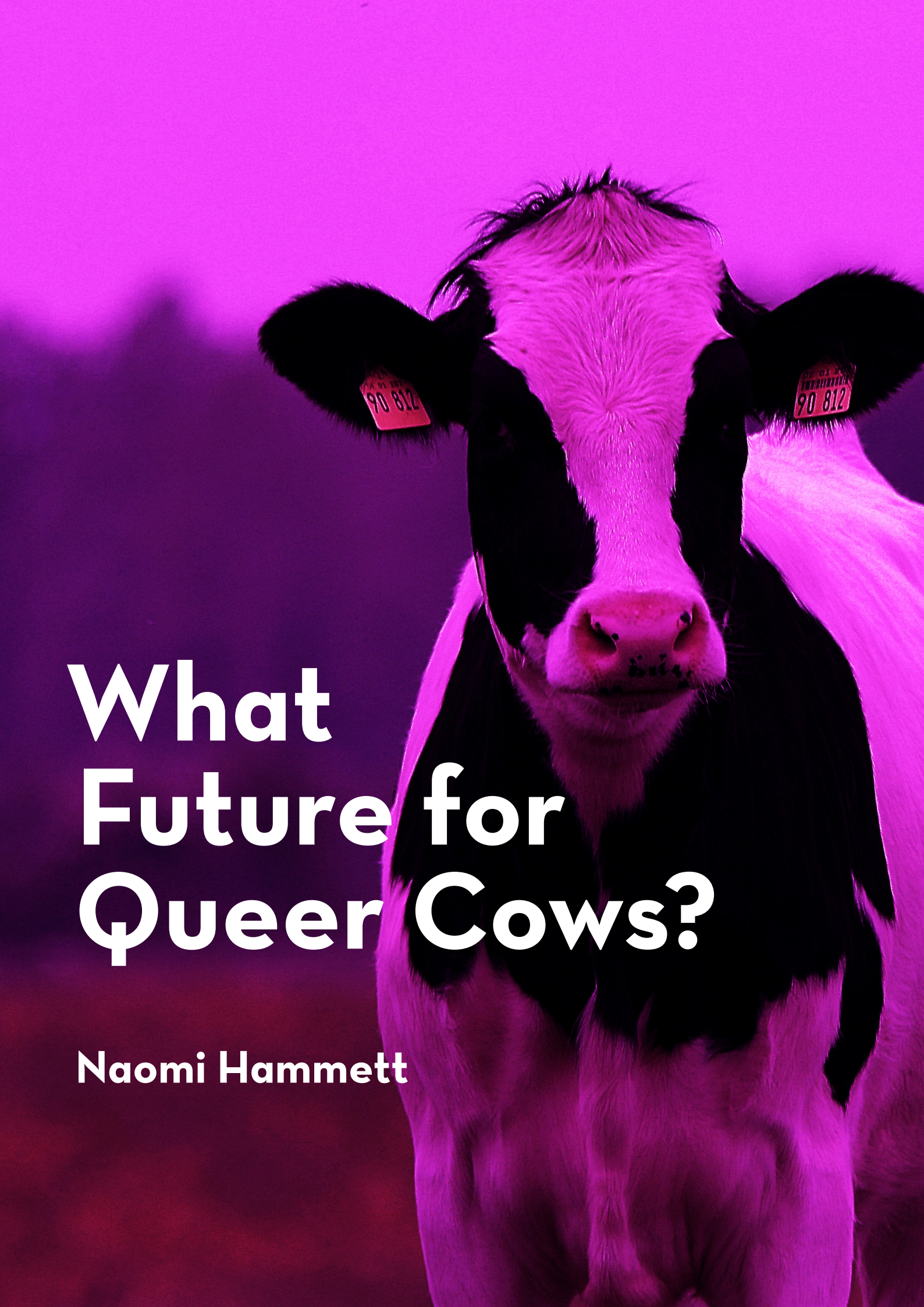

What Future for Queer Cows?

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on queer theory and fat studies, in particular Lee Edelman's No Future and his concept of 'reproductive futurism', I argue that dairy cows can be considered queer because they queer concepts of 'nature' and 'culture'. I argue that cows are caught up in their own 'reproductive futurism' as the prevailing ideology of the dairy industry is that each successive generation of cows should be bigger and produce more milk. Climate change presents a challenge for the dairy industry and one response from milk suppliers has been to require farmers to complete a carbon footprint, which I argue reproduces current and historic ideologies by its focus on productivity. Imaginings of sustainable futures, I argue, also use ideas of productivity – but of plants and soil being productive – cows often having no places in these futures because they are seen as not 'natural'. I use speculative fiction to imagine what good futures for dairy cows could look like.

CV

Naomi Hammett is a fourth year PhD candidate at Lancaster University in the Sociology department. Her research focus is on dairy farms in North West England and their response to climate change and the drive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with a particular focus on the narratives and practices relating to the lives and futures of cows. Naomi works predominantly within the field of Science and Technology Studies. She holds an MA in Environment, Society and Culture and a BA in History. She has had a previous career as a primary school teacher. Naomi can be contacted at: naomi.hammett@lancaster.ac.uk

KEYWORDS

Cows, Climate Shange, Multispecies Research, STS, Queer Theory, Fat Studies

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If being fat is to flout normative standards of beauty and health then being a Holstein cow is to flout characteristics associated with the "natural," such as purity, wildness, and beauty.

Introduction

On the wall in my office hangs a painting of a cow, *Rosie the Prize-Winning Cow.* The painting shows a Holstein cow in a side-on view, fat and happy. I think of the farmer who likely commissioned this painting of his cow and proudly displayed it on the wall. These paintings have a long history. In the mid-eighteenth century, at a time of agricultural revolution, farmers were experimenting with livestock breeding. This enabled them to redistribute flesh to desired parts of the body and shorten the time between birth and maturity. At this time, livestock portraiture became quite the thing.[1]

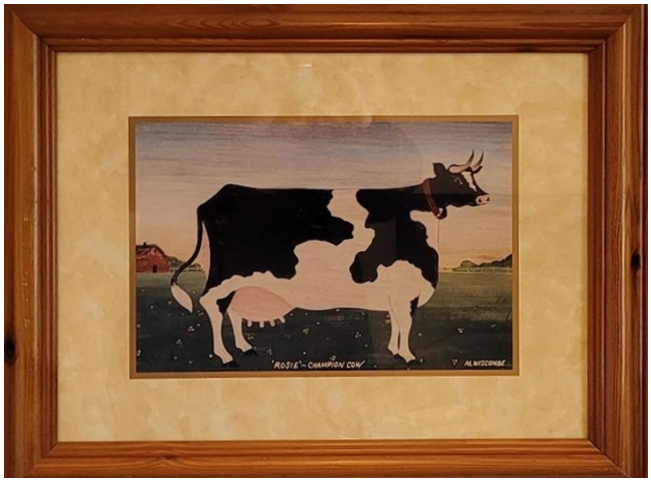

Fig. 1: "Rosie-Champion Cow", painting hanging in my office by M. Wiscombe

The historian Emily Pawley posits that "[t]o skilled eyes, animal portraits were repositories of a code that we are no longer trained to perceive"[2]. Such portraits became central in the implementation of "improved breeds"[3]. Artists were often encouraged to emphasize certain desirable features, so much so that it was noted that owners would not be happy until the likeness of their animals appeared "monstrously fat"[4].

The fascination with bodily excess in animal portraiture has much in common with the media trope known as "the headless fatty". The term refers to images where the heads of fat people are cropped from visual media, leaving untethered bodies that Majida Kargbo describes as "excessively bodied"[5]. All individuating characteristics are stripped away, leaving the fat body as an emblem of laziness and greed. In a similar fashion, side views of cows in ani-

[1] See Museum of English Rural Life (MERL), "Consuming the fat cows", https://blogs.reading.ac.uk/merl/2015/10/25/consuming-the-fat-cows/ (accessed 24 May 2023).
[2] Emily Pawley, "The Point of Perfection: Cattle Portraiture, Bloodlines, and the Meaning of Breeding, 1760–1860", *Journal of the Early Republic*, 36/1 (Spring 2016), 37–72 at 40.
[3] Ibid.
[4] MERL, "Consuming the fat cows" (see n. 1).
[5] See Majida Kargbo, "Toward a New Relationality: Digital Photography, Shame, and the Fat Subject", *Fat Studies*, 2/2 (2013), 160–172.

Fig. 2: Painting of a dairy cow from the MERL collection

mal portraiture emphasise their bodies as well as features—such as a large udder—that indicate superior breeding reflecting the skills of their owner.

In this article, I discuss intersections in the way that the lives and futures of queer and fat people and queer and fat cows are discussed and imagined. Please note that when I talk about cows I will usually be referring to Holstein cows. These are the black and white spotted cows that have become synonymous with dairy farming and were imported into the UK after the Second World War. Since then, there has been an emphasis on productivity within the dairy industry, with the philosophy being that each cow should produce as much milk as possible. Holstein cows, bred for their large udders, have been able to produce huge amounts of milk. In order to keep up milk production, their diet needs to be supplemented with high-protein fodder concentrates such as cereals and soya. Therefore, there are many who see Holstein cows as not natural and as inefficient as they are eating crops that could be fed directly to humans. As debates around climate change have gained ground, Holstein cows have become even more maligned because they produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

I will be exploring cows as queer creatures.

In order to do this, I will draw on literature from fat studies and queer theory, paying particular attention to the queer theorist Lee Edelman.[6] Edelman argues that Western society rests on the notion of "reproductive futurism"; that is, relying on the phrase "think of the children" to impose limits on possible futures. By embracing queerness, though, it is possible to subvert these possibilities.

Francis Ray White, a Gender and Fat Studies scholar, argues that fat people can be incorporated in this notion of queerness, and I extend this to ask if it might also be possible to incorporate cows.[7] In the following sections, I consider how concepts of cows' lives and futures are often approached via the reproductive futures of humans, both in the dairy industry and in sustainability narratives. I will end by speculating on what possibilities this opens for cow futures

[6] See Lee Edelman, No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive (Durham, NC, 2004).

[7] See Francis Ray White, "Fat, Queer, Dead: 'Obesity' and the Death Drive", *Somatechnics*, 2/1 (2012), 1-17.

that may exist beyond them being seen as entirely disposable.

Fat, Queer and Anti-social

Fat activism emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in the US and deployed practices such as protests, sit-ins at diet clinics, conferences, and books, with the aim to critique and fight against fat discrimination in medical discourse and society at large.[8] The discipline of Fat Studies has ties to fat activism and is a broad field organised around critical scholarship surrounding discourse relating to "obesity", in particular challenging links made between fatness and ill health. Queer theory and queer studies are similarly broad disciplines with indeterminacy at their heart; as Annamarie Jagose has written: "[q]ueer describes those gestures or analytical models which dramatize incoherencies in the allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desire."[9] In this section of the essay, I argue—following Francis Ray White—that there is conceptual room for fatness to fall into the realm of queerness, setting the scene for the cooptation of cows into these discourses.[10]

Fat Studies scholars have frequently drawn on queer studies to aid in their thinking around fat issues.[11] In this piece, I will be concentrating on one particular example of the generative overlaps of Fat Studies and Queer Studies. Lee Edelman's influential book, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, hinges on the premise that Western society is predicated on the notion of "reproductive futurism" (that is, the confining of political discourse to heteronormativity) that denies a queer resistance that would open up other ways of doing and being.[12] Edelman believes that this insistence of seeing queer futures as "other," as not possible, amounts to queerness being equated with the death drive, the drive to nothingness, oblivion.[13] Francis Ray White in their 2012 article "Fat, Queer, Dead: 'Obesity' and the Death Drive" applies the same conceptual lens to the case of narratives surrounding the Change4Life campaign, an anti-obesity campaign launched by the UK government in 2009 with the aim of encouraging behavioural changes leading to all individuals being able to maintain a healthy weight.[14]

White suggests that there is room enough in Edelman's definition of "queer" for the concept of fatness to be included. This is because Edelman acknowledges that there are many in the LGBTQIA+ community who do conform to "reproductive futurism" and so conceives of "queer" as something that disrupts the social order. Edelman contends that "[t]he queer must insist on disturbing, on queering, social organization as such—on disturbing, therefore and on queering ourselves and our investment in such organization"[15]. White believes that this definition has sufficient scope to encompass the theorisation of fat as queer, because being fat is to commit a "catalogue of transgressions [...] against normative standards of gender and sexuality, health and morality"[16].

[8] See Vikki Chalklin, "Obstinate fatties: Fat activism, queer negativity, and the celebration of 'obesity'", *Subjectivity*, 9/2 (2016) 107–125.
[9] Annamarie Jagose, Queer Theory: *An Introduction* (New York, 1996), 3.
[10] See White "Fat, Queer, Dead" (see n. 7).
[11] See Kathleen LeBesco, "Quest for a Cause: The Fat Gene, the Gay Gene, and the New Eugenics", in Esther Rothblum and Sondra Solovay (eds.), *The Fat Studies Reader* (New York, 2009), 65–74; Samantha Murray, *The 'Fat' Female Body* (Basingstoke, 2008).
[12] See Edelman, *No Future* (see n. 6).
[13] The concept of the death drive was originated by Freud. To learn more about it see Matei Georgescu, "Freud's Theory of the Death Drive", *Review of Contemporary Philosophy*, 10 (2011), 228–233.
[14] See White, "Fat, Queer, Dead" (see n. 7).
[15] Edelman, No Future, 17 (see n. 6).
[16] See White, "Fat, Queer, Dead", 5 (see n. 7).

By the same logic, I would argue that this definition of queerness is also broad enough to include Holstein cows. If being fat is to flout normative standards of beauty and health then being a Holstein cow is to flout characteristics associated with the "natural," such as purity, wildness, and beauty. Holstein cows do not live easy lives, they are separated from their children, often have diseases, have short lives and are killed once they outlive their usefulness. In the next section, I will develop the notion of queer cows by examining disciplines such as Science and Technology Studies that see animals as actors and Queer Ecology that extends the notion of queerness to animals and the environment.

Queering the Human and More-than-Human

In my research on cows, I examine how they figure in narratives of climate change, particularly as disturbances. Cows do not fit neatly into the category of nature, nor that of culture; they straddle binaries and become disturbing. They are not seen as natural because of their breeding and domestication, and they do not fully belong to culture because they are not humans. As animals who are bound up with technologies, they are queer creatures and are seen as a threat to "wild" animals because the land they inhabit is often lacking in biodiversity. In climate change debates, cows have become much maligned creatures for their production of methane, which is the biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector. Such debates, by zeroing in on cows, often neglect to properly examine the global agrifood system and intensive farming systems that have contributed to many of the issues that we are now facing. Within the dairy sector, the solution to reducing emissions is seen as quantification, control, and productivity.

The discipline of STS has grown from a desire to pursue a different take, especially in relation to the conducting of scientific practices. A central theme within STS is the questioning of dichotomies such as subject/object, nature/society, and another is working to overcome certain disciplinary distinctions to foster multidisciplinary collaboration.[17] Bruno Latour once proclaimed that humans "have never been modern"[18]. Modernity is a concept rife with tropes about the ingenuity of "man" and the primacy of humankind. In disavowing modernity, Latour has sought to challenge these assumptions and in so doing make space for objects, animals and all that is not human, as they had previously been neglected and marginalized.[19] Building on these foundations, Donna Haraway has gone on to declare that not only have we never been modern but that in fact, we have never been human, leading the way for a posthuman approach.[20]

There have been numerous attempts to extend queer theory to nonhumans. Noreen Giffney has drawn attention to the ambiguity of the term "human" and believes it to be "both a discursive and ideological construct which materially impacts on all those who are interpellated through that sign, especially those who find themselves on its margins or those who transgress its boundaries"[21]. Giffney asks "whether the act of queering is always already a posthuman endeavour" and wonders what implications such a premise could have for queer theory.

One discipline in which queer theory and the more-than-human have converged is queer ecology. Queer ecology is interested in commonalities between queer and ecological concerns, and interrogates notions such as health, purity, and toxicity that appear

[17] See Andrew Pickering (ed.), *Science as Practice and Culture* (Chicago, 1992).
[18] Bruno, Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA, 1993).
[19] See ibid.
[20] See Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis and London, 2008).
[21] Noreen Giffney, "Queer Apocal(o)ptic/ism: The Death Drive and the Human", in Noreen Giffney and Myra J. Hird (eds.), *Queering the Non/Human* (London and New York, 2016), 83–106 at 55.

in both sexual and environmental discourses.[22] One example of research in this area is Shiloh Krupar's research into the cleanup of a former plutonium factory in Colorado which centres performances of the drag queen Nuclia Waste.[23] Another example is research into anxieties around the "gay frog," which are argued to be rooted in sexual and racist discrimination called forth by the blurring of borders.[24]

Both STS and queer ecology provide tools to see cows as actors. Returning to Lee Edelman's concept of queerness as disturbing the social order and thus prompting the queering of our own relations with society, I believe the intense debates around cows and dairy farming in recent years—in relation to things like breeding practices and separation from their calves—prompt this queering of society and in particular the agrifood sector. A strong argument can be made for cows being queer creatures within this context. This is something that I will expand on in the next section by discussing how measures such as carbon footprints are imbued with long-standing ideologies present within agriculture, and what this means for cows.

The Reproductive Futures of Cows

Lee Edelman's notion of reproductive futurism argues against "terms that impose an ideological limit on political discourse as such, preserving in the process the absolute privilege of heteronormativity by rendering unthinkable, by casting outside the political domain, the possibility of a queer resistance to this organizing principle of communal relations"[25]. In terms of agriculture and food production, there is one particular version of this logic of reproductive futurism: that each generation of animals should be bigger, better, and more efficient than the last, achieved through genetic intervention. There are numerous articles on the subject of the agrifood system that are predicated on the imperative of future population growth.[26] Starting out with this future in mind often leads to neglecting current problems in the food system in favour of solving assumed problems of the future. Such an argument ties the reproductive futures of cows to the reproductive futures of humans. Dairy cows must continue producing children to continue to provide vast quantities of milk for a growing human population. Clay and Yurco define such a narrative as the imperative of "more milk" that has dominated the dairy industry since the onset of the twentieth century and in particular after World War II, since when milk output per farm and per cow has massively increased.[27]

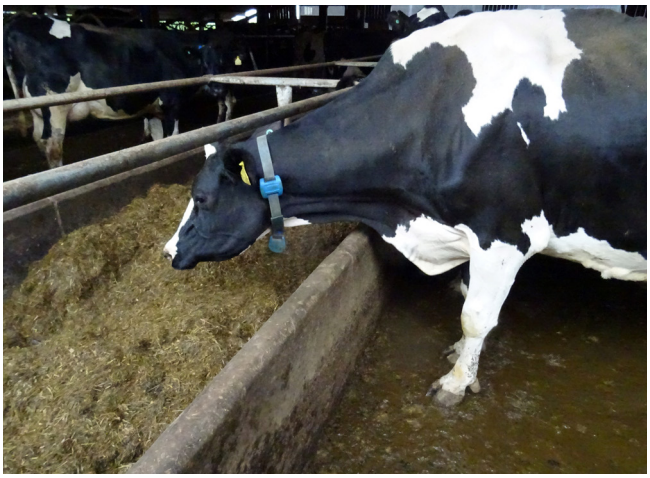

Fig. 3: Image of a Holstein cow taken on a farm in Lancashire taken by myself during fieldwork

[22] See Nicole Seymour, "Queer Ecologies and Queer Environmentalisms", in Siobhan Somerville (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Queer Studies* (Cambridge, 2020), 108–122.

[23] See Shiloh R. Krupar, "Transnatural ethics: revisiting the nuclear cleanup of Rocky Flats, CO, through the queer ecology of Nuclia Waste", *Cultural Geographies*, 19/3 (2012), 303–327.

[24] See Hannah Boast, "Theorizing the Gay Frog", *Environmental Humanities*, 14/3 (2022), 661–679.

[25] Edelman, No Future, 2 (see n. 6)

[26] See, e.g., Alexander Y. Prosekov and Svetlana A. Ivanova, "Food security: The challenge of the present", Geoforum, 91 (2018), 73–77; Martine Helms, "Food sustainability, food security and the environment", *British Food Journal*, 106/5 (2004), 380–387.

27 See Nathan Clay and Kayla Yurco, "Political ecology of milk: Contested futures of a lively food", *Geography Compass*, 14/8 (2020), 12497, https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12497 (accessed 3 July 2023).

Climate change poses significant challenges to this mode of productivity, as there is a need to reduce emissions significantly, at odds with continued growth.[28] Agriculture occupies 77 per cent of land in the UK and land use makes up 12 per cent of emissions.[29] Emissions are seen as a big issue in this sector, especially since there has been little reduction since the 1990s, mainly due to ineffective voluntary schemes.[30] There has been more success in areas such as energy and transport that are seen as easier to address with technological advances. Emissions from agriculture are harder to pinpoint and come from a range of livestock and land management practices.[31] One of the major sources of emissions from agriculture is methane that is produced by cows. How methane is measured and the significance of the role it plays in climate change is contested within the farming community. There are many proposed measures of how the amount of methane produced by cows can be reduced.

In Francis Ray White's paper "Fat, Queer, Dead: 'Obesity' and the Death Drive", discussed earlier, they examine the strategies employed in the government's Change4Life programme that sought to tackle the "obesity epidemic" by promoting the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. White believes that the strategy "employ[s] clinical measurements, namely BMI, in order to subjugate parents' (specifically mothers') knowledges and impose a rational and disembodied regime of regulation"[32]. The Body Mass Index (BMI) is a measure that uses height and weight to determine if someone's weight is "healthy". The BMI is a highly contested measure, and has been demonstrated to be extremely unreliable.[33] Julie Guthman explains the way that social influences are entangled with "scientific facts" by examining how calculations about growth in body size are influenced by prevailing social assumptions about size and health.[34]

It can be argued that a similar move is taking place in the dairy industry as some milk suppliers have invented their own carbon footprint measurements, to be completed by dairy farmers that supply milk to them. In so doing, the tacit knowledges of dairy farmers are subsumed by the outcomes of the carbon footprint which imposes a new epistemological playing field. In these carbon footprints, like the BMI, the ways in which emissions figures are displayed and therefore what is deemed important and what is not are all at play. With the emphasis on carbon footprints that can be produced easily through readily available figures, components like biodiversity do not commonly appear in these measures, and it is often measures of productivity that feature centrally.

It is possible that milk suppliers may decide the future of contracts with farms based on carbon footprints, so the results and recommendations of carbon footprints have a lot of sway in how farmers will change their businesses. This is completely in line with reproductive futurism.

By making these footprints such important currency and enabling industries to have such a fundamental say in their creation, it limits possibilities of doing things differently, which often means that the same logic of

[28] See Oxford Net Zero, "What Is Net Zero?", https://netzeroclimate.org/what-is-net-zero (accessed 26 May 2023).
[29] See Climate Change Committee, *Land use: Reducing emissions and preparing for climate change* (London, 2018), https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/land-use-reducing-emissions-and-preparing-for-climate-change/ (accessed 3 July 2023).
[30] See ibid.
[31] See Neil Ward, Net Zero, *Food and Farming: Climate Change and the UK Agri-Food System* (Abingdon and New York, 2023).
[32] White, "Fat, Queer, Dead", 11 (see n. 7).
[33] See Bethan Evans and Rachel Colls, "Measuring Fatness, Governing Bodies: The Spatialities of the Body Mass Index (BMI) Anti-Obesity Politics", *Antipode*, 41/5 (2014), 1051–1083.
[34] See Julie Guthman, "Fatuous measures: the artifactual construction of the obesity epidemic", *Critical Public Health*, 23/3 (2013), 263–273.

productivity that has been in operation in agriculture for a very long time continues to be reproduced.

This also has implications for the lives and bodies of cows continuing to reproduce and to produce milk, in huge amounts. The next section will explore how cows feature or don't feature in imaginings of sustainable futures.

Sustainable Futures

When considering how a sustainable food system is to be achieved, one approach has been to examine the possibility of transitioning to plant-based diets. For example, there has been a study that compared the carbon footprint of cow's milk to that of soy "milk" to try and determine which would be better.[35] Whilst nutritional factors were also considered, the study mainly relied on comparing carbon footprints. Another study points to the large emissions caused by the agricultural sector and proposes as a solution a move towards plant-based diets on a "worst first" basis, meaning that the transition away from beef should happen first because that sector has the highest emissions, and cow's milk, having the second highest, should be next.[36] Such a shift is framed as a "protein" shift, away from animal sources towards plant-based sources. Cattle are reduced to protein, their liveliness is erased, their worth reduced to their ability to provide a particular food group for humans. Whilst it is widely acknowledged that moving toward plant-based diets will be necessary, this is not what I take issue with; it is that its ethical ramifications are often not broached. It is clear that cows, particularly Holstein cows, are tied to the reproductive futures of humans, and if cows are deemed unnecessary in this equation, because food sources can be drawn from elsewhere, then they are no longer required. That is often the end of the discussion, instead of considering what this could mean for the lives and futures of cattle.

Another element in the discussion of the futures of cows is affected by the concept of nature and culture. As stated before, I believe cows are queer because they do not fit in the categories of either nature or culture, and it is clear from numerous contributions to literature that they are seen as more disposable because of it. For example, George Monbiot, in his article "Unholy Cow", claims that raising livestock organically over a relatively large area of land is very destructive to the environment.[37] Monbiot, when talking about regenerative farming, states that

> *"[l]ivestock farmers often claim that their grazing systems 'mimic nature'. If so, the mimicry is a crude caricature. A review of evidence from over 100 studies found that when livestock are removed from the land, the abundance and diversity of almost all functional groups (or 'guilds') of wild animals increases."*[38]

There is a clear hierarchy here with "livestock" placed in a category clearly different from that of wild animals. Land that is taken up with cattle and other farm animals is seen as a waste, providing very little protein and producing high levels of emissions, while that same land could be far more productive ecologically if given over to "wild" plants and animals. The logic of productivity is still being used here but the argument is turned around: Cattle are not productive, whereas wildlife could offer so many more benefits for carbon storage and biodiversity. Monbiot argues that meat and dairy should be created in a

[35] See Benedetta Coluccia et al., "Assessing the carbon footprint across the supply chain: Cow milk vs soy drink", *Science of the Total Environment*, 806/3 (2022), 151-200.
[36] See Helen Harwatt, "Including animal to plant protein shifts in climate change mitigation policy: a proposed three-step strategy", *Climate Policy*, 19/5 (2019), 533-541.
[37] George Monbiot, "Unholy Cow", https://www.monbiot.com/2022/08/19/unholy-cow/ (accessed 27 May 2023).
[38] Ibid.

lab and the land should be rewilded.[39] This is certainly a neat solution; nature and culture are put back in their boxes, and there is no messy entanglement anymore. The idea of cows existing outside of the current agrifood system is an interesting one that I will explore more in the final section on cow futures.

Cow Futures

Eva Giraud has noted that when it comes to imagining possible futures for animals and advocating for practical steps to get there, multispecies research can often be silent.[40] Similarly, White believes that the same is true for Edelman's *No Future* as Edelman states that any attempt by queer people to imagine a better future for themselves just ends up reproducing the same relations of oppression.[41] The logic being that insisting on imagining a future can limit the possibilities of that same future. However, White believes there is another way to offer alternative possibilities for what next.[42]

As Alexis Shotwell writes, "[i]magining and practising futures that are not 'more of the same' is difficult, necessary work"[43]. adrienne maree brown, one of the editors of *Octavia's Brood,* a collection of short stories taking inspiration from Octavia Butler to write visionary social justice-informed speculative fiction, writes that "the stories we tell can either reflect the society we are a part of or transform it. If we want to bring new worlds into existence, then we need to challenge the narratives that uphold current power dynamics and patterns"[44]. I have produced a very humble attempt at imagining possible futures for cows, inspired by the stunning work of Shayda Kafai who imagines queer, fat food futures.[45]

Dear Cows of the future,

What do I wish for you in the hot days to come? Snouts touching cool, fresh water and gulp, gulp, gulp. Trees for shade. Each other for comfort. Plenty of grass for your tongue to sweep up and for your teeth to chew. Babies suckling at your udders. There will be an abundance of communal caring. Bee, insect, soil, human, bird, cow, fox and on and on. Strong communities. More local food. If you give milk it will be less anonymous and more appreciated. You will not be expendable. I worry for the fate of worlds to come. I worry for you dear cows that have become so entangled in this capitalist nightmare. It is a constant background hum, this worry. What becomes of the marginal, in precarious futures? We have to imagine glorious futures for each other and share them and create them. I am sorry that I cannot be certain what cow utopias look like and how to get there, but I know there is a way towards joyous futures for you, barely possible but absolutely necessary joint futures.[46]

Conclusion

I am drawn again to Rosie the cow. It is late, and she is lit only by the white glow of my computer screens. She is almost cartoonish really, lopsided. Bony up top. Large udder on the bottom. An ideal of genetic breeding. All to give so much milk, which she undoubtedly did and her kin undoubtedly do, day after day. So much milk. Some drunk in coffee or on cereal,

[39] See George Monbiot, "Lab-grown food will soon destroy farming – and save the planet", *The Guardian*, 8 Jan. 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/08/lab-grown-food-destroy-farming-save-planet (accessed 31 Aug. 2023).
[40] See Eva Haifa Giraud, *What Comes after Entanglement? Activism, Anthropocentrism, and an Ethics of Exclusion* (Durham, NC, 2019).
[41] WSee White, "Fat, Queer, Dead" (see n. 7); Edelman, *No Future* (see n. 6).
[42] See White, "Fat, Queer, Dead" (see n. 7).
[43] Alexis Shotwell, *Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised Times* (Minneapolis and London, 2016), 165.
[44] adrienne maree brown:, "Outro,"", in: Walidah Imarisha and adrienne maree brown (eds.), *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements* (Oakland, CA, and Edinburgh, 2015), 279–281 at 280.
[45] See Shayda Kafai, "Imagining Queer, Fat Food Futures", *Fat Studies*, 9/3 (2020), 201–203.
[46] Maria Puig de La Bellacasa "Matters of care in technoscience: Assembling neglected things," *Social Studies of Science*, 41/1 (2011), 85-106, at 98.

some of it chucked. So much milk. So, I ask myself, what does it mean to live in these precarious times with a creature that has given us so much? What I ask of myself, and what I ask of you, is to dream big. Cows, Holstein cows especially, are queer, they do not fit, and yet I think it is essential that we imagine and work towards futures that contain all manner of queer creatures.