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Department of Communication

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The Representation of the Canadian Seal Hunt: Analyzing the Rhetorical Strategies of the Animal Rights Movement and the Canadian Government

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Running head: THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CANADIAN SEAL HUNT

The Representation of the Canadian Seal Hunt:
Analysing the Rhetorical Strategies of the Animal Rights Movement
and the Canadian Government

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August 2009

Keywords: Animal Representation, Animal Rights, Seal Hunt, Peircean Semiotic, Rhetorical Analysis, and Qualitative Methods



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Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-61314-6
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-61314-6

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Canada

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Abstract

This thesis provides an analysis of textual and visual communication documents used by proponents and opponents of the Canadian seal hunt (CSH). Using a direct analysis model, as well as principles of Peircean semiotic and rhetorical analysis, the recent discourses articulated by the anti-CSH movement (International Fund for Animal Welfare and Sea Shepherd Conservation Society) and the Canadian government (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) have been considered. The findings corroborate a social constructionist perception of nature, as the rhetorical discourse focused on presenting conflicting representations of the natural world, notably the seal. It was also found that the rhetorical discourse was centred on the subsidiary themes of the representation of the kill, the sealers, and the proponents and opponents of the CSH. The thesis also notes a complementary relationship between textuality and visuality within the CSH polemic, and finds the latter being abundantly used by the anti-CSH movement but comparatively absent from the Canadian government's strategy.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Strategic communication campaigns routinely appeal to emotion over reason, but few do so as overtly and efficiently as those advocating on behalf of divisive moral issues (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995). The intrinsically controversial nature of matters such as animal rights, coupled with the broad dissemination of images depicting bloodied animals, are said to have swayed public opinion to the extent of effecting policy changes. The focus of this thesis is the close study of the way in which activist movements use images and texts as rhetorical tools and as articulations of moral arguments that challenge institutionalised societal norms. Likewise, it will study how a governmental entity, acting as a countermovement, articulates its opposite ideological position in hopes of winning the battle for public opinion, and ultimately preserving status quo and keeping decisional control over domestic policy.

The present thesis focuses most specifically on the case of the Canadian seal hunt (CSH), and analyses the visual and textual documents used in recent communication campaigns by the animal rights movement (or, more appropriately, the anti-CSH movement) as well as by the pro-CSH Canadian government. With a framework stemming from postmodern rhetorical analysis (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001; Hill, 2004) this thesis investigates how opposing ideological positions¹ on the CSH are embodied semiotically and disseminated through words and images by both the anti-CSH movement and the Canadian government. This thesis thereby provides an understanding of how different ideological positions on the same issue can be represented in visual and

¹ The term *position* is being defined here as referring to a specific ideological or political stance taken on an issue. This specific project will consider that a position on the CSH consists namely of an opposition to or a support of the practice of the commercial seal hunt.

textual argumentation and, similarly, how a singular societal debate can be framed to reflect conflicting articulations of reality. Furthermore, this thesis more generally proposes a conceptual understanding of the composition and articulation of the rhetoric linked to the CSH polemic.

When exploring the theme of social movements, and more specifically that of animal rights activism, the role of rhetoric in gaining public favour and exerting influence on policy is significant. Jasper and Poulsen (1995), in their study of the animal rights and anti-nuclear movements, for instance, note that visual and verbal rhetoric are particularly efficient in attracting sympathisers and public support to social causes, even more so than influence from social networks (p. 493). It is of little surprise, then, that rhetoric (and, more broadly, communication strategies) has been identified as a powerful influence on public opinion pertaining to the CSH (Barry, 2005). The social polemic on the CSH has endured for the past six decades and has had undeniable impacts on Canadian domestic and foreign policy as well as socio-economic conditions of certain communities. Conversely, very little academic attention has been dedicated to the subject, especially in the last decade.

Significant works have investigated the creation of rhetorical discourses in the matter of animal rights (e.g. DeLuca, 2005; Baker, 2001; Jasper and Poulsen, 1995; Jasper and Nelkin, 1992); however none have considered the case of the CSH in detail. Furthermore, while some efforts have analysed the pro-CSH grassroots rhetorical strategies of the Newfoundland and Labrador community (Lamson, 1979) and others have studied, more generally, communication practices of the Canadian government (Large, 2001), there exists no evaluation of the rhetorical practices of the Canadian

government in relation to the CSH. Also, a lack of academic research on a holistic and comparative approach to studying the messages crafted by both social movements and countermovements has been identified (Klandermans, 1990; Groves, 2001; Jasper, 2007) and no work has been dedicated to simultaneously investigating the dissemination of anti-CSH and pro-CSH agendas. In other words, there is a need for understanding, interpreting and comparing the visual and textual argumentation that has fostered a public polemic exerting considerable impacts on Canadian society.

Furthermore, studying the CSH from a rhetorical perspective will help enrich the literature on the matter of animal rights activism within the field of social discourse.

Within the spectrum of animal activism, which can oppose a broad and diverse range of human activities (from drinking milk and owning pets to dog fighting and vivisection)², the CSH is considered to be markedly cruel and egregious, partly because its product is commonly believed to be seal pelts, which essentially yield luxury items that are not essential for human survival (Muth & Jamison, 2000, p. 846). The animal rights movement also considers the CSH to be inhumane and to be responsible for the killing of animals without sufficient minimisation of pain. Furthermore, the CSH has been at the forefront of several financial campaigns of animal rights groups, and is considered to be an especially profitable flagship issue (Barry, 2005). Therefore, it is considered that the case of the CSH possesses a timeliness and relevance within the animal rights movement and, more broadly, within the field of social discourse.

² The activities that are opposed by the animal rights movement can range from the seemingly mundane to the socially condemned. Activities such as drinking milk (or consuming other animal by-products) have been linked to the commodification and exploitation of animality (Singer, 1990), while pet ownership has been compared to servility (Mason & Singer, 1990). More controversial and widely condemned acts, such as animal fighting, and animal experiments and vivisection, have been linked to cruelty and are regarded as manifestations of specism (Regan, 2004).

1.1 The Modern Canadian Seal Hunt

A commercial seal hunt is launched in Canada every year in the springtime on the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec, and systematically brings about media scrutiny, international attention, and renewed public debate on the morality and rationale of the CSH's existence. Typically, the weeks leading up to the start of the hunting season also bring about a revival or an expansion of advertising campaigns of the anti-CSH movement. The Canadian government, in turn, attempts to counterbalance this negative attention by instigating its own communication efforts. According to recent polling, domestic opinion on the matter of the CSH is divided, and has ranged from 39% to 60% over the past years, with an apparent indication of decreasing support in most recent surveys.³ While the Canadian public is seemingly split on the matter of the CSH, this is not true of the Canadian political landscape, which is characterised by a nearly unilateral support for the CSH. All of the four federal parties currently sitting in Parliament (the Conservative Party of Canada, the Liberal Party of Canada, the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party) have vocally supported the CSH, and the Green Party is the only major federal Canadian party to oppose it. Similarly, support for the CSH is largely univocal in the provincial politics of Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec, where all sitting parties support the CSH.

³ Polling on the matter of domestic public perception consistently indicates a wide numerical disparity between proponents and opponents of the CSH. A 2005 poll mandated by DFO and conducted by Ipsos Reid found that 60% ($\pm 3.1\%$, 19 times of 20) supported the Canadian government's policy on sealing (DFO, 2005). A more recent 2008 independent poll by Ipsos Reid found that 39% ($\pm 3.1\%$, 19 times out of 20) of Canadians supported the hunt (Ipsos Reid, 2008). Similarly, a 2008 survey conducted by Environics Research Group and mandated by IFAW showed that 40% ($\pm 2.2\%$, 19 times out of 20) of Canadians supported the hunt (IFAW, 2009). It should be noted that the methodology and accuracy of several of these surveys have been disputed by the anti-CSH movement and the Canadian government alike, both arguing that Canadian public opinion is in their favour.

The CSH is conducted in rural areas and is practiced by individuals who earn most of their income from the fishing industry. The main part of the hunt (about 70 percent) occurs in Newfoundland and Labrador, in an area called the Front. The remainder occurs in Quebec, in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, in particular off the coast of the Magdalen Islands. While the specific dates of the sealing season can vary from year to year depending on ice conditions and seal migratory patterns, they mostly take place between late March and the end of April, first beginning in the Gulf and later commencing in the Front (Department of Fisheries and Oceans, 2006).

Several species of seals are hunted in Canada, specifically the grey seal, the hooded seal, the ringed seal, the harbour seal, the bearded seal and the harp seal. It is the hunt for the latter, however, that is the most extensive. The hunt for the harp seal has also garnered unrivalled scrutiny from domestic and foreign publics, and has effectively monopolised public discourse on the CSH. The hunt for the harp seal is limited by a quota (or “total allowable catch”) set by the Canadian government, which varies from year to year but has been set in the hundreds of thousands in the recent past.⁴ In addition to imposing quotas, the Canadian government, most specifically the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), sets policies and procedures and ensures the monitoring of the hunt. Seals are hunted using a variety of tools that are sanctioned by DFO, which include high-powered rifles, shotguns, firing slugs, clubs and *hacapiks*.⁵ While firearms

⁴ Quotas were numbered at 335,000 in 2006; 270,000 in 2007; 275,000 in 2008 (DFO, 2009a); and 280,000 in 2009 (DFO, 2009b).

⁵ The *hacapik*, while not the most prevalent weapon in the CSH, is the most visible and controversial. It consists of a wooden or steel bat with both a blunt hammer head and sharp spike at the end, designed respectively to strike the skull of the seal and then to drag it on the ice, thereby causing minimal damage to the pelt.

are most widely used (and chiefly in the hunt in the Front), the clubs and hakapiks remain an important part of sealing activities, specifically in the Gulf.

1.2 Brief Historical Overview

The seal hunt on Canadian territory can be dated back to as early as 4,000 years ago, when aboriginal populations practiced it for basic survival. While aboriginal peoples have continued hunting the seal since then, a more widespread hunt began in the 1700s, when European settlers found uses principally in the skin and oil of the seal, using them locally and exporting them to Europe for clothing, lighting and cooking purposes. Sealing on the Canadian east coast has endured and consistently grown throughout the following centuries, eventually leading to the creation of more diverse uses of seal products and the pursuit of international markets.

International antagonism towards the CSH can be dated back to the 1940s (Lust, 1967). At that time, the roots of the opposition stemmed from issues of conservation fuelled by a noticeably depleting seal population. Canada began to see a perceptible rise in the number and vigour of anti-CSH protests in the 1960s, at which time there was a qualitative change in the nature of the opposition. This shift is attributed to two catalytic documentaries⁶ that depicted what were deemed to be brutal hunting practices (Lee, 1989). The documentaries gained world-wide attention, and the footage of seals skinned alive and left to die on Canadian ice banks launched a rhetorical war, where both anti-CSH and pro-CSH organisations joined in a moral debate which put into question the

⁶ The first of the two documentaries, *The Path Through Penguin City*, was produced in 1955 by Lillie Harry, a Scottish conservationist and physician. The second and most significant film was the 1964 documentary *Les grands phoques de la banquise*, which was produced by the Artek Film Company, but mandated by and initially aired on Radio-Canada. The film most notably contained a scene where a hunter skinned a live seal, thereby becoming the subject of a Canadian House of Commons hearing in 1969 (Royal Commission on Seals and the Sealing Industry in Canada, 1986).

public understanding of the seals, the commercial hunt and those who take part in it (Barry, 2005). Public attention and protests in the 1970s and 1980s yielded significant victories for the anti-CSH movement. In 1979, the United States adopted a ban on the import of products derived from seals. Then, in 1983, the European Commission, which was at the time importing nearly 75 percent of the pelts, adopted a ban on products made from newborn whitecoat seals.⁷ Canada opted to permanently ban the commercial hunt of whitecoat seals in 1987, after the industry had been rendered largely unviable because of the European Commission's ban. This momentous change in the landscape of CSH, according to Barry (2005), was implemented in part to deprive the anti-CSH movement of its main symbolic weapon: the bloodied whitecoat (p. 154). The ban on the hunt of whitecoat seals was nonetheless construed as a substantial victory of the anti-CSH movement. After that time, the CSH industry brought about important operational changes and began targeting slightly older beater seals.⁸

Protests against the seal hunt have endured since then, and several noteworthy recent events have occurred that have had the effect of invigorating media and public interest on the matter of the CSH and of shaping the interplay of the current polemic between the anti-CSH movement and the pro-CSH Canadian government. These have included changes in the monitoring of the hunt and introduction of new regulations by DFO on the proper killing procedure, which now requires the seal to be bled out for a full minute before it can be skinned, as a means of enforcing a humane hunt. In addition, other policies directed at anti-CSH protesters have been implemented, which include the

⁷ *Whitecoat* is the name attributed to newborn harp seals, usually of less than 12 to 14 days of age. They possess a unique (and formerly commercially desirable) white or yellowish fur (see Figure 4).

⁸ *Beater* is the name attributed to harp seals that have begun moulting their pale coats, usually after 12 to 14 days of age, and begin showing a soft greyish coat (see Figure 6). They remain to this day the main target of the CSH.

mandatory requirement of licences for observing the hunt in proximity and the government pursuing several legal actions against infringing protesters. Recent sealing activities have also been characterised by a few mediatised accidents, most significantly one in which four sealers drowned as their damaged ship was being towed by the Coast Guard in the Gulf in March 2008.

Furthermore, over the last four sealing seasons, the value of seal pelts has been consistently dwindling due to lack of consumer demand and progressively limited markets, which has resulted in the number of seals being killed being much lower than the quota allotted by DFO.⁹ Furthermore, steadily increasing operational costs and worsening ice conditions have translated into new financial challenges and safety hazards for sealers. In May 2009, the European Parliament passed a bill banning the import of all products derived from seal hunting, after significant and long-standing lobbying of the anti-CSH movement, and despite the Canadian government's sending of specialised delegations to Europe. While this does not directly affect the majority of seal exportations, which are directed at Norway, China and Russia, the ban is expected to have repercussions on the influential European fashion industry's use of seal fur, and consequently the global market for seal pelts, and is considered to be a significant blow to the CSH industry.

1.3 Terminological Considerations

Language and terminology can carry extensive rhetorical weight and this remains true for academic examinations of moral debates. For this reason, I consider it crucial to address and justify two specific terminological choices that were made in writing this thesis, in order to maximise both clarity and research objectivity. These choices are those

⁹ According to DFO, a seal pelt was valued up to \$105 in 2006, \$62 in 2007, \$30 in 2008, and \$15 in 2009.

of the use of the term “seal hunt”, the use of objective pronouns in referring to non-human animals, as well as the exclusion of the human species from the denotation of the term “animal” as it is used in this thesis. Each of these will be discussed below.

1.3.1 Hunt, Sealing, Slaughter and Harvest

When taking into account the significant political and social contention that exists surrounding the issue studied in the thesis, it is important to clarify the debate on the rightful and objective appellation of the hunting of seals. The anti-CSH movement has interchangeably used the terms “seal slaughter” and “seal hunt” for decades and the latter, until recent debate, was widely considered to be a neutral term that is essentially synonymous with “sealing”. In 2006, DFO decided to minimise the use of the terms “seal hunt” and “sealing” (in a strategy to eliminate negative connotations that had been associated to them) and to use the term seal harvesting in all communication and official policies (DFO, Email to employees, 2006). While the term “sealing” seems perhaps to be a more objective appellation for the hunting of seals due to its general absence from anti-CSH and pro-CSH discourses alike, a review of the literature has found that the appellation “seal hunt” is still predominantly used in the academic field (Barry, 2005; DeLuca, 2005; Garner, 2005) and is considered to be a correct and objective designation. For this reason, this thesis uses the terms “seal hunt” and “sealing” interchangeably.

1.3.2 Human and Non-human Animals

The matter of linguistically attributing personhood to non-human animals fundamentally stems from a rich and complex philosophical debate on the metaphysical identity of humanity. The vast academic research on the relationship between humans

and animals has not yielded a consensus on the appropriate ways to verbally discuss animals (Stibbe, 2001, p. 154). The present thesis, however, will not use personal pronouns such as “he” or “she” when referring to animals and will instead favour the objective pronoun “it”, as a means of keeping with a more traditional designation for animality and, more practically, as a way of avoiding unnecessary confusion pertaining to gender. In a similar fashion, the pronoun “which” will be favoured over the pronoun “who” when referring to non-human animals.¹⁰

Furthermore, it is widely recognised that biological classifications of species see humans as one amidst a plethora of types of animals. For the sake of simplicity and clarity throughout the thesis, however, the term “human” will refer to the *Homo sapiens* species of animals, while the term “animal” will refer to all other species of animals.

¹⁰ See Dunayer (2001) as well as Gilquin and Jacobs (2001) for discussions on speciesist language and the objectifying power of words, specifically associated with not using personal pronouns in reference to animality.

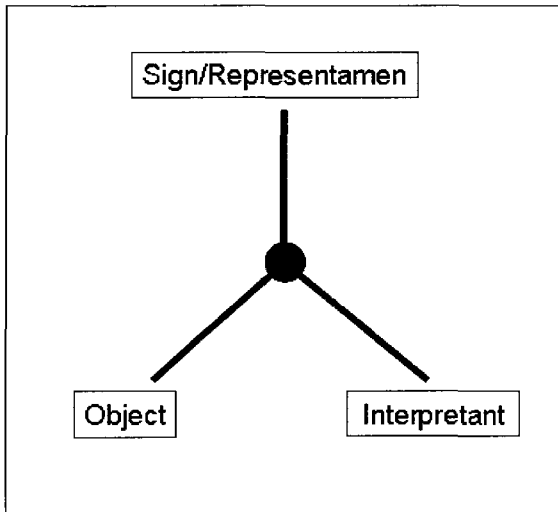
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The review of relevant literature will first consider Peircean semiotic, specifically its triadic model, as well as notions of rhetoric. The explanation of these theories, as well as an overview of the ways in which they relate to one another, will be provided so as to justify their concurrent application as theoretical frameworks. Then, a summarised description of the philosophical traditions pertaining to the understanding of the human-animal relationship will be presented, in hopes of providing a conceptual basis for the study of modern rhetorical representation and contemporary attitudes pertaining to matters of animal rights. The discussion on the relationship between humans and animals will then give rise to an exploration of the representation of animality, chiefly through an articulation of the themes of anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism, which respectively contribute to the framing of animals as subjects and objects. The literature review will also consider the works pertaining to modern animal rights movements, as well as the countermovements that they spawn, most specifically in relation to the rhetorical strategies that they have each been found to employ. Finally, the limited, albeit relevant, academic attention that has been specifically dedicated to the CSH will be presented, in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the rhetoric that dominates the discourse on the CSH.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Semiotic as a Theoretical Framework

Figure 1: Triadic Model



tradition of semiotic founded on the writings of the American logician and philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) is rooted in the concept of a triadic relation between the sign (or representamen), the object and the interpretant that interact in a process known as semiosis (Figure 1). Peirce explains how the sign, the object and the interpretant work together:

A sign, or representamen, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the ground of the representamen. (CP 2:228)¹¹

¹¹ This thesis quotes Peirce's work following two standard referencing practices. References relating to *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings, 1893-1913* will be made using (EP x.x), referring to

Interaction between these three entities or semiosis is in essence a process through which meaning is produced and (probably) understood. Peirce also introduces three specific conceptions of the sign when it is considered in itself, insofar as its nature. It can be understood as being a qualisign, a sinsign and a legisign also understood to be tone, token and type. The *qualisign* (or *tone*) refers to a sign that consists of a quality (EP 2:294). An example of a qualisign would be the whiteness abstracted from a seal, by virtue of it being a sign acting as a quality. The *sinsign* (or token) is a sign that refers to an actual individual object or event. An example of a sinsign would be a specific element, a particular occurrence of the word “seal” within a text, for instance. Peirce notes that a sinsign (from *sin* understood as meaning once) “can only be so through its qualities; so that it involves a *qualisign*, or rather, several qualisigns [...b]ut these qualisigns are of a peculiar kind and only form a sign through being actually embodied” (Peirce, EP 2:291). Finally, the *legisign* refers to a law that is a sign, and is “not a single object, but a general type which, it has been agreed, shall be significant” (Peirce, EP 2:291). It is considered to be a law, a norm or a habit. An example of a legisign (or type) would be referring to the seal as a “harp seal” or by its scientific name “*Pagophilus groenlandicus*”, which entails the recognition of a type. Lastly, it is important to note that there are three different kinds of relationships that can exist between the representamen and the dynamical object¹², which are *symbolic*, *iconic* or *indexical* in nature. The representamen or sign functions as

volume and page number. *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* will be referenced using (CP x.x), indicating the volume and paragraph.

¹² We must briefly note here the difference between immediate and dynamical object. Peirce notes that the *immediate* object refers “to the Object as cognized in the Sign and therefore an Idea”, while the *dynamical* object refers to “the Object as it is regardless of any particular aspect of it, the Object in such relations as unlimited and final study would show it to be” (CP 2.498). In that sense, the relationship between the sign and an object is articulated with a dynamical object. For instance, returning to the seal as an example, the dynamical object could be compared to the seal as it really is, outside of any sign process. The immediate object would be the idea of the seal, as it is understood to be formed by its signs.

a symbol when it embodies a rule or a convention that must be learnt. It functions as an icon through a quality that it possesses independently from the object that it represents, and as an index through an existing physical or causal relation that it holds with the object.

2.1.2 Rhetoric as a Theoretical Framework

The relationship between semiotic and rhetoric is founded on the premise that semiotic, understood to be the science of signs, has a much broader scope of study, one that simultaneously supersedes and encompasses rhetoric. Eco (1979) writes that:

From Aristotle to Quintilian through the medieval and Renaissance theoreticians up to Perelman, rhetoric appears as a second chapter in the general study of semiotics (following linguistics) elaborated centuries ago. Therefore a bibliography of the semiotic aspects of rhetoric seems identical with a bibliography of rhetoric. (Eco, 1979, p. 14).

Rhetoric can be understood as being the art of persuasion or even strategies for achieving an impact (McQuarrie & Mick, 2003, p. 196). Academic research centred on rhetoric has traditionally been associated with the study of orality, by virtue of it being historically its earliest manifestation. Ong (1988), who points to the shift from orality to literacy in society as bringing about a momentous shift in the human thought process, also notes that “rhetoric itself gradually but inevitably migrated from the oral to the chirographic form” (Ong, 1988, p. 116). In that sense, rhetoric was seen to be converging with society’s growing literacy. Most scholars in the field of rhetoric hold that its purest manifestations are embedded in the expression of oral and textual argumentation, and ultimately through their association with language. The French rhetoric scholar Olivier

Reboul restricted the scope of rhetoric even further by writing no more than two decades ago that “rhetoric is the art of persuading by means of speech”¹³ (Reboul, 1991, p. 188).

Of course, the association of rhetoric to speech can be dated back to Greek and Roman antiquity, through Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian’s pondering on rhetoric. Aristotle’s theorisation of rhetoric, however, is widely considered to be the most extensive examination of rhetoric in classical antiquity, as well as an unavoidable conceptual precursor to the modern study of persuasion. Aristotle defined three forms of rhetoric, those of *ethos* (ethical appeals), *logos* (logical appeals) and *pathos* (pathetic appeals or appeals to emotion) (*Rhetoric*, 1356a-1358b). Ethical appeals are linked to the rhetor’s credibility and authority, which render him or her trustworthy. Logical appeals are linked to engaging reason through the use of induction, deduction and facts, in order to support an argument. Pathetic appeals are means of persuasion that rely on appealing to the emotion or sympathy of the audience. Aristotle further prompted the cataloguing of certain patterns of speech, or rhetorical figures, which were associated to the persuasion of an audience.¹⁴

Aristotle seemingly considered the spoken word to epitomise the persuasive expression of the rhetor (*Rhetoric*, 1354). Aristotle called *demonstration* the art and the process of persuasion and considered *enthymeme* to be one of its main instruments.

¹³ Translated from the original French: « Voici donc la définition que nous proposons : la rhétorique est l’art de persuader par le discours » (Reboul, 1991, p. 188)

¹⁴ Rhetorical figures, which are commonly called figures of speech, occur when “an expression deviates from expectation, [...and] conforms to a template that is invariant across a variety of contents and contexts” (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996, p. 425). The two categories of rhetorical figures, schemes and tropes, are, at their core, linguistic manipulations that have a predilection for exerting influence onto a public. Schemes are considered to be modifications of standard word order or pattern (e.g. alliteration and anaphora) and tropes are the transformation of the meaning normally associated to words (e.g. metaphor and metonymy). In adherence to the traditional association of rhetoric to the verbal, tropes are most commonly associated with words. However, they can also be similarly applied to images or other semiotic elements (ibid, p. 428).

Enthymeme refers to an argument that holds a premise purposely unstated by the rhetor to its audience. Through language, the rhetor will engage the audience, who will in turn be directed to discover the unstated premise and ultimately be rendered an active and essential participant in its own persuasion (*Rhetoric*, 1355). However, as noted by Blair (2003), the claim of the use of orality and the medium of the spoken language for rhetoric is made only implicitly by Aristotle (p. 41). This has tempted some scholars to easily reconcile principles of modern and classical rhetoric, and to even incorporate visual rhetoric within the breadth of Aristotelian rhetoric. It is possible, however, to argue that a lack of an explicit association of rhetoric to orality in Aristotle reflects a strict homology, too obvious, acquired and irrefutable to even merit clarification. DeLuca (2006) rather posits that Aristotle allowed a “wonderful openness that suggests rhetoric is always a seeing anew of a social field in constant flux” (p. 81), thereby changing and contextually reflecting the opportune communication practices. This interpretation considers Aristotle’s contribution not only to be a significant precursor to visual rhetorical analysis, but mostly an epistemological legitimisation of the field.

Since the latter half of the 20th century, and persisting to this day, there is an irrefutable expansion of the scope of the study of rhetoric. Burke (1966) significantly widened our understanding of the field of rhetoric, most prominently by defining it as the use of symbols to persuade individuals who naturally respond to them. He asserts that the use and interpretation of symbols is a fundamental and unique feature of humans (Burke & Gusfield, 1989, p. 80). Burke’s definition of rhetoric allows for the inclusion and mingling of various incarnations of persuasion, including, but not limited to, the spoken and written word and images, insofar as they are considered symbols (Kenney & Scott,

2003, p. 19).¹⁵ There is little doubt that this increased academic appreciation for the field mirrors society's growing preference for visuality not only as the raw material for very influential cultural artifacts, but ultimately, and perhaps consequently, as a privileged conduit for persuasion (ibid, p. 25). Also, in the last decades, images and videos effectively mobilised individuals and ignited movements whose protests effected change, while image management has become a central preoccupation of politicians. The image is being increasingly considered an essential element of persuasive strategies (Elkins, 2003, p. 7), and the symbolic study of images has become an academic field embedded in a postmodern research context (Hope, 2006, p. 6). This shift has fueled the study of visual symbolism, which has made it propitious for it to shed the stigma of irrationality, illogicality and immeasurability that was once assigned to it (Williams, 2006, p. 45).

Also, traditional conceptions of rhetoric consider it to be an essentially hegemonic tool, in the sense that rhetoric is used by those in power to strengthen their authority. According to Scott and Smith, "[s]ince the time of Aristotle, academic rhetorics have been for the most part instruments of established society, presupposing the 'goods' of order, civility, reason, decorum and civil or theocratic law" (1979, pp. 7-8). At first glance, this may seem to contradict the use of rhetoric in studying cases of social activism and dissident discourse in society. Olson and Goodnight (1994), however, find a

¹⁵ It is worth noting that Burke's use of the term "symbol" differs from its previously-described use by Peirce. For Peirce, a sign can function as a symbol when it is "independently alike of any resemblance or any real connection, because dispositions or factitious habits of their interpreters insure their being so understood" and thereby embodies a rule or a convention that must be learnt (EP 2,461). For Burke, symbols are understood to be, more generally, essential components of human reality that permeate all areas of human knowledge, best exemplified by Burke's (1966) definition of the human as a "symbol using animal" (p. 3). In Burke's theory, the centrality of symbols to human understanding can be found to relate more fully to the meaning generation role of semiosis. In fact, Burke similarly introduces the notion of "terministic screens", suggesting that symbols act as a screen through which the world can be categorised and understood (Burke, 1966, p. 45), thereby making symbols the most basic element of meaning-making.

departure from this conception of rhetoric in contemporary society, and note the growing importance and prevalence of oppositional arguments. Whereas in the latter:

[The] enthymeme accomplishes the end of persuasion by affiliating the claims of the speaker to the conventional knowledge or opinions of an audience, [while] oppositional argument functions to block enthymematic associations and so disrupt the taken-for-granted realm of the uncontested and commonplace. (Olson and Goodnight, 1994, p. 249)

Studying the rhetoric of artifacts aimed at persuasion ultimately lies on the premise that the author of the rhetorical document (or any document for that matter) is presented with a plurality of options: whether it be the tone or words in oral and textual documents, or the colour and angle in a visual document. The creation of persuasive communication most often entails a deliberate choice or speculation on which components are likely to have the desired outcome. When referring to visual communication, Kenney and Scott (2003) write about images and find that “[b]ecause each visual view of an object necessarily excludes some or all of the other views [...] then all pictures are unavoidably selective and, therefore, irretrievably rhetorical” (p. 21).

2.1.3 Barthes and Photography

In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes (1981) contributes to the modern understanding of rhetoric, notably by evaluating how it is articulated through visuality and text and, in particular through photography. He writes about two elements that are simultaneously embedded in the photographs as well as generated by our interpretation of them. The first element is the *studium* and denotes the general impression or cultured interest that one invests in an image. In this respect, the *studium* is a “kind of education (civility,

politeness) that allows me to discover the *Operator*” (Barthes, 1981, p. 28, emphasis in original). It encompasses—and, to a certain extent, communicates—an overarching and somewhat distanced understanding of the photograph. Our interest in studying the second element, the *punctum*, lies in the way it interacts with or affects human subjectivity and emotion, as well as its opposition or contrast with the *studium*. There are two distinct elements essential to the understanding of the punctum. The first relates to a detail, a perhaps formerly unseen photographic element of the image “which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces” (Barthes, 1981, p. 26) the viewer or the spectator. The ability of the *punctum* to pierce stems from an existing or perceived contradiction or co-presence between what is overtly conveyed by the *studium*, and what is discreetly—albeit strongly—observed and felt (almost physically) through the *punctum*. The second understanding of the *punctum* can be framed as a phenomenon of time, in our knowledge that what has been photographed became an expression of the past the moment it was captured on film. Barthes’s realisation of the *punctum*, specifically how it relates to the mortality of the subject, is shown by the photograph by Alexander Gardner depicting Lewis Payne, a young man sitting in a cell, awaiting execution for the attempted assassination of Secretary of State W. H. Seward in 1865. For Barthes (1981) “[t]he photograph is handsome, as is the boy: that is the studium. But the punctum is: he is going to die” (p.96). Barthes continues, stating:

I read at the same time: *This will be* and *this has been*; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future. What pricks me is the discovery of this equivalence. In front of the photograph [...] I

shudder [...] *over a catastrophe which has already occurred.* (emphasis in original, 1981 p. 96)

The contradiction between the *studium* and the *punctum* here is fundamentally an evocation of the end being near to the beginning: the handsome boy, the image of which would expectedly evoke the future, here peculiarly evokes death. The photograph forces the viewers into an exercise of construction and gives them the onus of continuing the narration and facing the mortality of the subjects that are depicted as well as their own. The *punctum*, according to Barthes (1981), will make the image “annihilate itself as medium to be no longer a sign but the thing itself?” (p. 45) and thereby *overpowers* the image, making the *punctum* act as the most essential and powerful element of the image. Therefore, this understanding of Barthes’s writing suggests that the rhetorical and persuasive clout *embedded* in the photograph lies in the *punctum* (DeLuca, 2006, p. 86).

2.2 Representation of Animals

In the Western philosophical tradition, significant attention has been devoted to humans’ interpretation of their relationship with animality. This can in fact provide a conceptual foundation for modern attitudes towards animals (Hills, 1993, p. 111). Most significantly, in searching for a common thread across Western thought on animal ontology, it is possible to distinguish an almost unilateral questioning of the link between humans and the natural world and, even more significantly, a discussion on the human-animal relationship. Garner (2005) notes that fundamentally “[n]o mainstream political theorist is, or has been, prepared to accept that animals should be regarded as morally equivalent to humans or even morally close to humans” (p. 12). Outcomes of

philosophical ponderings have most often been variations of a profoundly dualist theory: one that emphasises the disparity between humans and animals, and the superiority of the former over the latter (Lippit, 2000, p. 33). This line of thinking dates back at least to Aristotle's articulation of the humans' dominance and uniqueness lying in his ability for speech, and has persisted since. The perceived disparity between humans and animals culminated with religious influence in St. Thomas Aquinas' presentation of animals being created solely to serve human needs and, most infamously, with Descartes' depiction of animals as mere machines (automata) (Garner, 2005, p. 12). It is in fact the Cartesian thought that most drastically objectifies animality, to the extent of equating animal sounds of pain and physical responses to stimuli to mechanical occurrences, thereby emboldening the ontological discrepancy between humans and animals¹⁶. Descartes' *indubitable certainty* proposes that humans' superiority lies in their seemingly unique ability to articulate thought, a theory that is reminiscent of Aristotle's classic association of the primacy of humanity to its ability for speech. In stating "I think, therefore I am", Descartes attributes the humans' certitude of their existence to their capacity for thought and thereby proposes an association between logic and dominance.

The uniqueness of humans was put into question most significantly by the theory of evolution, specifically by its rendering of the common biological roots of humans and animals. This is seen as a significant precursor to the belief that animals have intrinsic value, independent of their use to humans (Jasper, 2001, p. 163). Darwin's publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859 "supported the growing belief that humans and animals were descended from common ancestors, with all the similarities that implied" (ibid, p.

¹⁶ Also noteworthy here is Lawrence's (1994) argument that Descartes' distinctions between mind and body, soul and physical being, observer and observed, and human and animal have been profoundly embedded within Western society's perception of the world.

163) and preambled the emergence of philosophical theories that rejected anthropocentrism, and rather supported a biocentric homology among living beings. This led the way to closer examinations of the relationship between human and animal, leading to the creation of the field of zoosemiotic, which was developed within the Peircean tradition of semiotic. Zoosemiotic can be defined broadly as a “communication network model for languages [that] is applied to signaling behavior in animals” (Sebeok, 1965, p. 1006) and focuses on the communication that may arise between species, specifically between animals or between a human and an animal. Later, the notion of deep ecology, as introduced by Naess (1973, 1990), provided a philosophical grounding for social activism, specifically in matters related to the protection of the natural world. Naess (1990) suggests a holistic conception of the natural world that calls for the recognition of the intrinsic value of all living nature, an egalitarian stance towards all species as well as the “submergence of human self in a larger natural self” (p. 7). Deep ecology proved to be a new way of imagining the human-animal relationship and a significant philosophical foundation for animal rights activism (Long, 2004, p. 20).

Derrida reconsiders the dualist relationship between humanity and animality within a postmodern philosophical context. His essay, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, outlines the importance of the dominance-subjugation axis within the human-animal relation to the underpinnings of Western thought. In fact, he finds that his own outlook on philosophy, the world, as well as his understanding of the place he occupies in the latter, are simultaneously put into question and disturbed when he stands “before a cat that looks at you without moving, just to see” (2002, p. 372). From this arises a distinct form of impropriety (or *malséance*), which he identifies as *animalséance*. He questions the

logical tenets that form the basis for assuming the intrinsic superiority of humans and, consequently, calls for a profound shift in the understanding of human-animal relations, one that requires humans to consider the world “from the vantage of the animal” (Derrida, 2002, p. 390). In Derrida, we find a clear departure from the traditional association of the human’s superiority to what Derrida refers to as the *logos*—which could be likened to the ability for speech found in Aristotle’s description of humanity, but chiefly to the ability for thought, central to the Cartesian indubitable certainty. Derrida (2002) steps away from the traditional association of the human’s superiority to his ability for *logos* and instead finds the animal’s ability to suffer to be determinant to its value.¹⁷ Derrida notes that “[n]o one can deny the suffering, fear or panic, the terror or fright that humans witness in certain animals” (2002, p. 396). Derrida therefore proposes a sizeable shift “from a metaphysical concept of animals—as machines in Descartes’s thought—to an empirical account” (Fudge, 2006, p. 114), suggesting that the intrinsic value of the animal can be demonstrated by our observation of its ability to experience pain. In that sense, animals should not be the same as humans, rather, their singularity should be recognised and their alterity should not be mitigated by including them in a homogenising and objectifying category such as “animals” (Bruns, 2008, p. 404).

We are left to wonder, however, how the theoretical conceptions of the human-animal relationship translate into attitudes towards animality. Adorno (1974) likens the human’s outlook on animals to his perception of the *other*: a group that is identified as different and usually inferior (p. 105). The ease with which cruelty is afflicted on the other is heightened by their perceived difference from the afflicter. Likewise, the further

¹⁷ In fact, Derrida revives Bentham’s famous statement in 1789 on the matter of animal morality: “The question is not, Can they reason? Nor, Can they talk? But, Can they suffer?” (1948, p. 311). Bentham deems that the animal’s ability to experience pain and pleasure warrants giving them a certain moral status.

detached an observer feels from a “victim” the more the perpetration of a crime will be tolerated. Adorno (1974) notes that:

Indignation over cruelty diminishes in proportion as the victims are less like normal readers [...] The defiance with which [the reader] repels [a dying animal’s] gaze – ‘after all, it’s only an animal’ – reappears irresistibly in cruelties done to human beings, the perpetrators having again and again to reassure themselves that it is ‘only an animal,’ because they could never fully believe this even of animals. In repressive society the concept of man is itself of a parody of divine likeness. The mechanism of ‘pathic projection’ determines that those in power perceive as human only their own reflected image, instead of reflecting back the human as precisely what is different (p. 105).

Adorno thereby explains that important similarities between an individual and the perceived other (embodied in humanity or animality) can be eclipsed by a process of rationalisation. According to Adorno, the distinction between human and non-human is used as an instigator of, and as a rationalisation for, dominance and violence.

Adorno’s argument on the perceived distance between the human and the other, or between the human and the animal brings us to an important point in the study of animal representation. The study of textual and visual representation of animals has significantly mirrored the dualist and hierarchical philosophical conceptions of the human-animal relationship and has yielded two—perhaps oppositional—ideas on animality. The rhetorical representation of animality can in fact be said to be materialised

through an articulation of animality's distance to humanity, or more precisely through a negotiation along an axis of anthropocentrism-anthropomorphism. Anthropocentrism (from the Greek *ánthrōpos*, meaning 'human' and *kentron* meaning "centre") keeps with the dualist tradition and proposes a lessening of the value of the animal to the point of its objectification, thereby reinforcing the dominance of the human over the animal.

Anthropomorphism (from the Greek *ánthrōpos*, meaning 'human' and *morphē* meaning "form") proposes an elevation of the value of the animal to that of the human, and nears an egalitarian stance.

2.2.1 Representation of Anthropomorphism

As noted by Gadd (2005), anthropomorphism relates to a constructed humanisation of the animal, in a way that attributes to it a subjective identity. Gadd situates its rise to the late twentieth century, when there was a "decentring of humanity's self image in relation to nature in general" (p. 248) which, in turn, grew into an empathetic concern for animals and an egalitarian stance towards the relationship between humans and animals (Gadd, 2005, p. 248). Anthropomorphism is rooted in humans' tendency to interpret animal behaviour by attempting to liken specific acts or expressions to emotions or patterns that they can clearly identify within themselves. Bullock (200) writes:

Anything that strikes us as 'expressive' in the behaviour of another creature makes us pick something in our human vocabulary of appearances to which we can see a correspondence, and then let that 'expression' speak to us as though we had made a reliable translation from one bodily form to another. (Bullock, 2002, p. 112)

Anthropomorphism is ultimately the perception and construal of animality through a human prism. It is no surprise, therefore, that certain species, whose behaviour and appearance particularly resemble those of humans, are most easily anthropomorphised. Several authors have found that humans routinely hierarchise animals (Kellert, 1993; Driscoll, 1995; Paul, 1996; Czech & Krausman, 2001), finding that animals that are most dissimilar to humans are deemed less worthy of protection and are more likely to entice aversion and fear. Conversely, animals that most resemble humans—both in general appearance and behaviour—will garner more sympathy and public attention. For instance, animals susceptible to expressions of pain that are similar to the human's (whimpers, screams or the spilling of red blood, for instance) are more easily anthropomorphised (Burghardt & Herzog, 1980, p. 763). Paul (1996) found that this hierchisation of animals is reflected in humans' depiction of animals. In her study of animal representation in the context of various media, including television programs and print advertising, she finds that overwhelmingly, some animals are depicted in a more favourable light and are portrayed as being more loving and lovable creatures and therefore more worthy of human attention (Paul, 1996). She notes that mammals, birds and reptiles are represented more positively than fish and invertebrates. Also, when looking at the depiction of animal suffering, she found that the condemnation of the suffering only existed when mammals were in pain. When suffering occurred in animals other than mammals, the situation was "presented without comment or judgement" (Paul, 1996, p. 176).

Morreall (1991) argues that animals that possess characteristics typically found in human babies will benefit from heightened sympathy from human. He discusses an

aesthetic category that he calls *cuteness*, which can be defined as a visual manifestation of attributes typically found in human infants that can have “derivative applications [...] to the young of other species such as dogs and cats, and to the adults of species such as the koala and the panda, which resemble human babies in certain ways” (Morreall, 1991, p. 39). His guiding hypothesis suggests that “in the evolution of our mammalian ancestors, the recognition and appreciation of the specialness of the young had survival value for the species” (1991, p. 40). The features that have garnered recognition and appreciation evolved along with certain mammalian species and became embedded within the physical characteristics of their young. Morreall attributes the term “cuteness” to these features. He further remarks that humans will be more willing, or perhaps evolutionarily predisposed, to care for and nurture animals that share certain attributes of cuteness with human infants (p. 43). In that sense, Morreall implies that observable aesthetic traits and behaviours displayed in some young and adult animals exert a persuasive force. It is a force that seemingly plays a decisive role in the level of compassion that is expressed towards them and that makes them especially susceptible to eliciting emotional responses from humans. Cuteness is articulated—originally in our notion of human babies, and reassigned to animals—through various observable physical attributes such as “a head large in relation to the body”, “a large protruding forehead, with the eyes set relatively low in the head”, “round, protruding cheeks”, a “plump, rounded body shape” with “short, thick extremities and “soft body surfaces”, as well as a “behaviour indicating weakness and clumsiness” (Lorenz, 1971 as quoted in Morreall, 1991, p. 42). Animals that possess these characteristics will therefore be considered to have a higher degree of cuteness than others, and will benefit from greater human

attention and protection. In fact, the commercial markets have, for years, capitalised on the human attachment to cute animals, and often re-imagined physiological attributes of species by overstating their cuteness identifiers. This is done most specifically by exaggerating “supernormal” representations of cuteness found in babies and some animals, most often seen through the depiction of unnaturally oversized heads and eyes (Morreall, 1991, p. 43-44). The toy industry, for instance, has long profited from producing embellished representations of animality (Walsh, 1992, p. 654), just as have producers of films, television programmes and books through manipulated renderings of animals—see Lutts (1992) for a description of cuteness in Disney animals and Allison (2004) for a discussion on the more contemporary market dominance of Japanese cuteness.

We have seen how Morreall’s argument attributes the human’s empathetic attitudes towards animals to aesthetic and behavioural characteristics intrinsic to the animal’s genetic composition. Others, however, propose more nuanced explanations for the human’s hierarchisation of species that allow for a greater discrepancy among individuals’ compassion towards animality and account for a societal influence. While agreeing with the notion that humans will be more inclined to positively regard animals to which they are similar, Plous (1993) finds that, more significantly, human compassion towards a specific animal species is inversely correlated to its perceived utility or usefulness (p. 43). In other words, the human’s concern for an animal’s well-being will be lessened by the benefits brought on by using it as a commodity. This suggests that the compassion does not merely stem from a set of innate characteristics that are intrinsic to the animal, but rather (or at least partly) from the relationship they hold with humans.

Likewise, human compassion for a species is especially subjective and should in no way be considered unilateral across cultures and time. Plous' theory is corroborated by Hills (1993), who conducted empirical research on the human perceptions of animals and articulated a dyadic relationship of "empathy and identification" and "instrumentality" (p. 111). Hills explains that farmers, who find great benefit in the commodification of animals, tend to perceive them as useful and feel very little identification and empathy towards them. Likewise, farmers have a heightened belief in human dominance over animals. On the other hand, research conducted among animal rights advocates displayed the opposite pattern: the perceived usefulness of the animals was mitigated and the empathy and identification were increased, thereby creating a conviction of equality between humans and animals.

Urbanisation and industrialisation have profoundly changed the way in which people interact with animals. Only a small portion of the population is consistently in direct contact with animals through farming. This shift has instigated somewhat of a paradox in the modern conception of animality: one that is based on the scarcity of wildlife and the simultaneous increase in the domestication of animals. Serpell (1996) writes that most humans come across very few wild animals, and that the bulk of a human's experience with animality consists of encounters with domesticated animals. This creates a unique paradox within society that is reflected in the relevant literature. On one hand, as noted by Herzog and McGee (1983) and Plous (1993), the lack of animals in urban and suburban settings makes it easier for humans to use them as commodities. For instance, packaged meat that is ready for human consumption can be easily purchased and the consumer never needs to be exposed to the live cattle. On the other hand, Jasper

and Poulsen (1995) note that the “‘civilizing process’ through which we have enclosed our nuclear families in private homes and heightened our emotional attachments to family members has included pets” (p. 505). Society’s domestication of animals has incorporated pets within the family unit, triggered the creation of emotional bonds between the human and the animal, and consequently fostered the projection of human attitudes onto animals (Jasper and Poulsen, 1995, p. 505).¹⁸ Animals are considered “similar to humans, yet in some ways better” (Jasper & Nelkin, 1992, p. 17). They are given names, cared for like children and often buried after death. Jasper and Nelkin (1992) refer to this as “sentimental anthropomorphism”, in that it “combines a projection (accurate or not) of human traits onto animals, and an emotional valuation of animals for their own sake rather than as economic resources” (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995, p. 505). From this arises a situation where humans can reassign the perception of animals they have acquired through their experience in pet-keeping to wild animals (Lerner & Kalof, 1999, p. 571). Wild animals are rendered potential pets that are deserving of human care.

Furthermore, Lash and Polyson (1987) note that anthropomorphism is linked to the genderisation of animals. Humans tend to project a specific gender (predominantly male) to an entire species of animals; according to the way they seem to reflect stereotypical gendered roles in society. This projection is “based on how the animals’ perceived traits mesh with cultural understandings of gendered characteristics” (Lerner and Kalof, 1999, p. 571). Other studies (Haraway, 1989; Serpell, 1996) link anthropomorphism to the projection of a typically human narrative onto animals. In fact,

¹⁸ It is interesting here to note empirical studies on this matter that reveal that sympathisers of animal rights are more likely to own pets and are less likely to live with people, thereby making domesticated animals integral to their immediate social network (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995, p. 505). Furthermore, studies have shown that pet ownership has been steadily on the rise in Western countries (Jasper, 1997 p. 164).

animals can be portrayed as enjoying essentially human activities and thereby become “story-telling instruments” (Haraway, 1989, p. 41), in which humans are the typical protagonists. Jasper (2007) notes that these trends are reprised in the rhetorical representation of animality in the context of activist movements, through projecting typically human scenarios onto the beleaguered animals by, for instance, emphasising the mourning family of a dead animal (p. 176). Additionally, Baker (2006), found that animals in movies (most significantly the Disney animated movies) tend to be anthropomorphised, which has embedded in popular culture a new conception of animality. He also found that the mediatised representation of animals as idealised beings in the social imaginary¹⁹ has fostered an aversion to animal cruelty in Western society (p. 230). Muth and Jamison find a good example of this in the film *Bambi*, produced by Walt Disney in 1942, about which they write:

“by successfully anthropomorphizing Bambi, Walt Disney dramatically changed how hunters are regarded in American society [...and] animals appear not as humans imbued with frailties, complexities, and failings but as idealized, simplified versions of humanity. (Muth and Jamison, pp. 846-847)

2.2.2 Representation of Anthropocentrism

The notion of anthropocentrism proposes an objectified representation of animality that is founded on the traditional dualist conception of the relationship between humans

¹⁹ The term “social imaginary” here, can be defined according to Castoriadis’ (1987) articulation of the term, which is considered to involve the creation of significations specific to a society that are founded on meanings and values. Castoriadis writes that “[i]t is the unceasing and essentially undetermined (sociohistorical and psychical) creation of figures/forms/images, on the basis of which alone there can never be a question of ‘something’. What we call reality and rationality are its works” (1987, p. 3).

and animals (Kalof and Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 119). Baker (2001) notes that the rhetorical representation of animality—whether it be visual or textual—is still largely negotiated according to a Cartesian *subject:object* opposition in the social imaginary, and that the association between animality and object (in the sense of a demeaning process of objectification) has been staunchly engrained in our understanding of the world (p. 78-79). For Baker (2001), from the moment humans think in terms of this binary relationship, animals “invariably represent the negative term in the opposition” (p. 83). According to Noske (1989):

It seems that modern Western society more than any other emphasizes the ‘Otherness’ of non-humans. By drawing a sharp dividing line between human and non-human, a vast gap is created between *subject* (the free acting human agent) and *object* (the passive acted-upon *thing*) ...We perceive ourselves as belonging to a totally different order: the realm of *culture*, while all other beings and inanimate things are only *nature*. (Noske, 1989, p. vii)

Baker (2001) finds a telling example of the objectification and otherness of the animal in language; with animal terminology serving as cultural expressions of contempt. He notes that not only are animal figures used as “unfavourable characterization of others” in language, but the term “animal” itself is often used in lieu of “criminal” (Baker, 2001, p. 89).

Another rendering of the representation of the objectification of animals is presented in Lippit’s (2000) *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife*. In his study of animals in Western philosophy, he notes an overwhelming yet surprising consensus

that asserts that animals cannot die. Of course, Lippit acknowledges that this notion does not supersede the obvious inevitability of each animal's physical death. Rather, he posits that death in itself is considered an experience of life that is only "lived" by humans (Lippit, 2000, p. 172). Lippit (2002) describes animals as lacking memory, imagination and language and ultimately unequipped to make "that certain calculation toward finitude" (Lippit, 2002, p. 36) and, even in the instance of death, they can never meaningfully die. Animals are, in a very specific way, rendered immortal and are condemned to exist perpetually in a spectral state. Put otherwise, animals, because of their incapacity for language, are devoid of the singularity or subjectivity that is inherent to the philosophical conception of the human.²⁰ Since an "animal being is not thought of as singular, the death of each individual organism is survived by the entire species" (Lippit, 2000, p. 172). Therefore, the animals within a species are fundamentally interchangeable and each animal is an extension of the other. Discursive representations of animality mimic this trend and have contributed to the mitigation of animal identity; in so far that it is "dispersed throughout the pack or horde, which preserves the individual organism's death within the framework of a group body or identity" (p. 172-173). In addition, a true conservationist stance towards animals arises only from a fundamental change in the way in which animals are construed: a transition from immortal object to mortal subject. Animals could no longer be considered immune to death, and their experience of death would be turned into one that is significant and homologous to human death.

²⁰ We can look no further than to the Western thought's focus on the metaphysics of the individual and the extensive discussions on the existence and importance of the human soul.

Also, the notion of the animal gaze is prevalent in discussions of the representation of animal objectification. While it has not been discussed in literature in connection to the animal rights rhetoric, it has been of essential concern in studying dead, dying or subjugated animals; most notably in relation to zoos (see Berger, 1980), hunting trophy images (see Kalof & Fitzgerald, 2003) and taxidermy (see Baker, 2006; Desmond, 2002). All of these fields encompass discussion about the look that humans cast upon animals, the degree to which this look is returned and, most interestingly here, the power that is inherent to the exchange of a gaze between human and animal. Berger (1980), in an early critique of zoos, notes the objectification and marginalisation of animals that are incorporated within the zoo display. He argued that “[t]he visibility through the glass, the spaces between the bars, or the empty air above the moat, are not what they seem” (p. 24). They are, in actuality, mere theatre props that have been created for the spectator and that rob the animal of any subjectivity. This “theatrical decor for display” only exemplifies the total deprivation of genuine life or existence of the animal, rendering its utility and significance to that of a mere object. The setting allows humans to gaze freely upon animals, but the look can hardly be returned: “[a]t the most, the animal’s gaze flickers and passes on ... [t]he look between [human and animal] has been extinguished (p. 26). Burt (2005) explains an interesting paradox in Berger’s notion of the gaze in zoos:

[L]ooking here is more than simply seeing. [...] One cannot have the idea of looking without the idea of being looked at in turn and, in the instance of humans and animals, this possibility is irretrievably ruptured. (p. 207)

Burt (2005) considers this notion a “strength” in that the look entails an active participation of both human and animal and negates the latter’s contextual (and perhaps inherent) objectification. The animal, in the fleeting instance of the gaze, becomes a subject capable of looking at another subject. However, herein lies the problem. Berger writes of a single look: a sole occurrence that is too short-lived to forge a human-animal relationship (Burt, 2005, p. 207).

Berger studied the look that is actively and simultaneously exchanged by a human being and a live animal. However, conclusions similar to his have been articulated in studying re-creations of animality, where a human’s gaze cannot be consciously returned by the animal. According to Kalof and Fitzgerald’s (2003) study of the photography of dead animals in hunting magazines, representations of “animal bodies are the epitome of objectification” (p. 119), and most clearly show the fracture that exists between representation of humanity and animality. The photography of a dead animal is in fact the transformation of an animal (already considered more object than subject) into a wholly inanimate object or thing that merely resembles a dominated and docile creature. The representation is created solely to be gazed upon by humans. Following the same line of thought, Baker (2006) considered the animal’s gaze in the case of taxidermy. He notes that the foremost challenge in taxidermy is to construct the animal’s eyes in a manner that is lifelike but, more importantly, that does not appear to stare at the human (who may very well be the killer) or cast an accusatory or reproachful look (p. 85-86). He emphasises humanity’s “anthropocentric expectation of animal *propriety*: that it is humans who are to do the looking and expect the animal to be there to be seen, to look like an animal, and not to look back” (my emphasis, Baker, 2006, p. 84). Baker’s

terminology reminds us here of Derrida's previously-discussed notion of impropriety (or *animalséance*) that arises when an animal returns a stare and triggers an unsettling reevaluation of our familiar understanding of the relationship between human and animal. Kreilkamp (2007) explains that "[f]or Derrida, the gaze between a language-less animal and a human being encapsulates the ethical and political problem of recognition and reciprocity" (p. 85).

The gaze of the animal highlights the insurmountable dissimilarity between human and animal, while hinting at an unsettling sameness. The *animalséance* propels Derrida to move beyond the traditional opposition between human and animal and to adopt a *limitrophy* or literally a pluralisation of limits (Derrida, 2002, p. 397). This new way of looking at animality allows for singularity and subjectivity, and finds species and specific beings no longer bound into a homogenising and degrading "animal" category. He writes that the question of the animal:

"becomes interesting once, instead of asking whether or not there is a discontinuous limit, one attempts to think what a limit becomes once it is abyssal, once the frontier no longer forms a single indivisible line but more than one internally divided line, once, as a result, it can no longer be traced, objectified, or counted as single and indivisible" (Derrida, 2002, p. 399).

Certainly, by extending Derrida's argument on the singularity of the animal, we see that it is unlikely that this *animalséance* can be experienced unilaterally in all human-animal encounters. What seems to be the exceptional force of the animal's gaze to disturb the human's perception of his relationship with animality surely has its limits—a pet fish would not have held Derrida's gaze to the extent of his cat. Interestingly, Smith (2005)

studies the gaze of a cat and of a rabbit depicted interacting in a single photograph (p. 194). Each animal's gaze is fixated on the camera to the extent that its physiology will allow it (both of the cat's close-set eyes are staring at the viewer while the rabbit, which has a blind spot at the nose-level, must stare sideways). Smith notes that while she *knows* that both animals are staring at her through the photograph, she only feels a reciprocal stare with the cat. She writes:

My sense of [the cat] and myself was reinforced through a mutual gaze. The rabbit also looked at me, but because of his kind of vision, he seemed less aware of me, less able to know me as a 'self'" (Smith, 2005, p. 194).

While both animals are staring at the viewer, only one retains her attention. The rabbit will never be able to gaze and connect with Smith to the same extent as the cat. Bullock (2002) argues that the impact of the animal's gaze is chiefly tributary to a capacity to watch with which we invest it. In looking at the animal, we can be reminded "that there is something, a life, an existence that in some way echoes our own, but which remains always behind what meets our gaze, elusive impossible, unimaginable" (p. 101). Nonetheless, the homology between the human and the animal can become indisputable: the animal is also animated by desires, fears, pleasure and pains, that eerily seem to reflect our own (p. 116).

2.3 The Animal Rights Movement and Countermovement

In understanding the persuasive components of diverging positions on matters of animal rights, research conducted on society's interpretation of the natural world can provide insight. Before investigating the rhetorical strategies that have been created to promote certain ideological positions on animal rights, it is important to understand the

interplay that exists between society and nature. To this end, social constructionism provides an appropriate theoretical lens. Social constructionism offers an essentially postmodern interpretation of the natural world, thereby refuting the possibility of articulating its absolute and univocal representation, as well as providing an opportunity to understand a natural crisis as a social creation (Burningham & Cooper, 1999, p. 297-298). Wapner (2002) explains that “‘nature’ is not simply a given, physical object, but a social construction—an entity that assumes meaning within various cultural contexts and is fundamentally unknowable outside human categories of understanding” (p. 167). In this sense, there is a plurality of interpretations of nature, which accounts for the cultural and historical conjectures, and mirrors the diversity of actors and stakeholders within society. Certainly, an extreme conception of social constructionism is one that refutes “that there are features of the world which exist independent of discourse and social construction” (Dickens, 1996, p. 74). However, a more nuanced version of social constructionism should be observed: one that allows for an objective account of nature but also emphasises that the very act of transforming nature into subjective and meaningful constructions can have exceedingly important impacts on policy and can influence environmental management (Harker and Bates, 2007, p. 350). In the specific case of animal rights, social constructionism and its postmodern tenets do not refute the empirical realities of the environment, such as the depletion of species or destruction of habitat, but look beyond them at how they are interpreted and constructed in society.

Harker and Bates’ (2007) qualitative investigation of the black bear hunt in New Jersey can present a case study relevant to the notion of the social construction of nature and provide an example of social constructionism within the animal rights debate. By

conducting a content analysis based on letters to the editor and editorials from newspapers, they attempted to illustrate how claims about the polemic of the bear hunt were constructed concurrently by pro-hunt and anti-hunt individuals within a community. The study attempted to understand how differing social constructions can exacerbate conflict and foster intractability rather than create the conditions for reaching a consensus (p. 330). Harker and Bates (2007) found that those who oppose and those who support the hunt articulate and promote different conceptions of the animal, each attempting to de-legitimise the other's rhetorical construction. In fact, very different and often profoundly contradictory representations of the bear are projected (p. 329). Harker and Bates (2007) note that the proponents of the hunt portray bears as "menacing threats" while opponents portray them as "benevolent and peaceful animals" (p. 329). The constructions of the bear are fundamentally incongruous: the first being of an animal that is dangerous to humans and the second being of a harmless creature. Furthermore, supporters and opponents of the hunt depict conflicting representations of the hunters, the former presenting hunters as "defenders of wildlife" and the latter as "bloodthirsty killers" (p. 329). In essence, the issue of the black bear hunt (and, by extension, similar cases of especially divisive animal rights public debates) cannot be solved through empiricity, as further scientific data on the matter would not change the fact that stakeholders rely chiefly on their conception of the relationship between humans and nature (p. 331). The matter is, ultimately, publicly negotiated through a subjective articulation of nature. In this sense, social constructionism provides a valuable prism to comprehend how and why societal conflicts arise and unfold within society.

The interplay that occurs between social movements and their countermovements is an important fixture of contemporary politics and public discourse. Various definitions of the term “social movement” have been articulated in the literature (see Diani, 1992), but Tarrow (1994) concisely defines it as “collective changes by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities” (p. 3). Countermovements, on the other hand, can be understood to advocate for a cause that is contrary to that of the original movement. Mottl (1980) provides a more thorough definition in stating that a countermovement is a “response to the social change advocated by an initial movement [...that] mobilizes human, symbolic, and material resources to block institutional social change or to revert to a previous status quo” (p. 620).²¹ The following paragraphs will be dedicated to understanding the strategies used by activist movements and their countermovements, specifically in the case of animal rights’ activism.

The last few decades have seen a rise in social movements as a whole, and animal rights welfare movements in particular. DeLuca (1999) found that the growing prevalence of media and the rapid dissemination of images have been a powerful instigator (or at least a powerful fuel) for the rise of animal activism (p. 4). Muth and Jamison (2000), on the other hand, have found the animal rights movement to be a product of “profound sociocultural and demographic shifts occurring within modern

²¹ While the present research’s focus on animal rights movements clearly fits within the scope of the social movements, it is not at all obvious that the focus on the Canadian government’s response to anti-CSH activism is reflected in the notion of countermovement. While countermovements are typically presented as formations that are organisationally similar to social movements, I consider here that the literature on the topic can provide relevant insight into the strategies used to counter the rhetorical strategies of social movements.

society” (p. 841). They note four aspects of the societal conjecture that have spawned the rise of the animal rights movement:

1) an urban epistemology (or world view) disconnected from the reality of wild nature; 2) a popularized interpretation of science which, for many people, provides evidence for a belief in animal rights; 3) anthropomorphism, or the projection of human traits and characteristics onto nonhuman animals; and 4) egalitarianism, in which the concept of rights is extended to the nonhuman animal world. (Muth & Jamison, 2000, p. 841)

Significant academic attention has been allotted to the strategies and tactics of animal rights activism. Several authors (e.g. Burt, 2002; Jasper & Nelkin, 2001; Donald, 1999) have emphasised the importance of rhetoric in the public discourse on the animal rights movements. Groves (2001) writes that the animal rights movement is traditionally a women’s movement. In recent years, it has tended to “embrace emotional neutrality, science, and ways of looking at the world that they consider masculine” (p. 228) and uses emotions only in very specific instances, including capturing the public’s attention. Interestingly, Groves notes that the countermovements, which are typically construed as being the more rational in the debate, are eager to show emotionality and to present themselves as pet lovers capable of empathy (Groves, 2001, p. 228).

Jasper and Poulsen (1995) explain that animal rights groups’ uses of “moral shocks” in the form of visual and verbal rhetoric are particularly useful in gaining supporters. They describe moral shocks as being events or situations that profoundly defy the widely-held values of a population. (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995, p. 498). The outrage triggered by moral shocks can potentially alter public opinion and lead individuals

towards political action. Instances where the perpetrators of the misdeeds that instigated moral shock are clearly identified are more likely to yield public action, as a clear target can be recognised (Erickson Nepsad & Smith, 2001 p. 173). Certainly, these moral shocks and the outrage that ensues can be generated by the unravelling of public events—an oil spill that seriously endangers wildlife, for instance. However, they can also be purposefully orchestrated or exposed through the rhetorical appeals of activist movements. Jasper and Poulsen note that “[t]he most effective shocks are those embodied in, or translatable into, powerful *condensing symbols*”, which can be defined as “[m]ultireferent, visual or verbal encapsulation(s) of other cultural meanings” that clash with society’s norms (my emphasis, 1995, p. 495, 498).²² Condensing symbols are rhetorically powerful tools (visual, textual or otherwise) that are carefully chosen and used for their capacity to elicit moral shock. Baker (2001), when discussing the photography of cruel acts against animals (this will be further discussed later), notes that textual descriptions of atrocities are especially apt at garnering public attention. Also, a visual documentation of cruelty is most likely to elicit shock among the public, as it is “usually less easy to refute than the written word” (Baker, 2001, p. 221).

DeLuca (2005) notes an emerging form of rhetoric in activist movements, one that is used to promote social and environmental consciousness in a postmodern world and aims to oppose hegemonic discourse. He notes that this rhetoric, called “image-events”, is created in the careful staging, crafting or creation of events allowing alternative societal discourses to be propelled onto the public sphere. The notion of

²² Jasper and Poulsen are alluding to Sapir’s (1934) distinction between “referential symbol” and “condensation symbol”. Referential symbols can be generally defined as symbols devoid of emotion that have evident and commonly-accepted meanings. Condensation symbols are a “highly condensed form of substitutive behavior for direct expression, allowing for the ready release of emotional tension in conscious or unconscious form” (Sapir, 1934, p. 493).

image-events is, in some ways, similar to the concept of media events articulated by Katz and Dayan (1986, 1992). Media events can be defined as profoundly ceremonial and historic occurrences, which interrupt routine, deal with sacred matters and bring about a response from an audience (notably through television broadcasts) (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 14). In that sense, both image-events and media events have a fundamentally visual dimension and, more significantly, imply the likelihood of being a powerful and influencing force within society. According to DeLuca, Katz & Dayan's (1986) explanation of media events, however, "implies too narrow a definition of media and too specialized and ritualistic an event" to be made fully synonymous to DeLuca's conception of image-events (DeLuca, 2005, p. 165). The image-events notably lend themselves to photographic or textual narrative representation in a way that attracts public attention, triggers dialogue and potentially influences policy through the shaping of public opinion (DeLuca, 2005, p. 52). DeLuca posits that the creation of image-events now represents a central asset in the animal rights movements' rhetorical arsenal. This tool has flourished because of its ability to capitalise on the omnipresence of visual media and its spectacle-like grandeur regularly garners worldwide attention. DeLuca's notion of image-events is corroborated by Wapner's (1995) study of the rhetorical efforts of the environmentalist group Greenpeace. Through its "direct-action" methods, the group has interfered with whaling activities, while using an approach that prioritises documentation and mediatisation (p. 321). Wapner (1995) writes that mass dissemination of these actions (or these image-events, using DeLuca's terminology) can contribute to "dislodging traditional understandings of environmental degradation and substituting new interpretive frames" that contribute to re-imagining the environment (p. 321). In this

sense, the actions taken by the animal rights movement go well beyond their immediate impact. They become instead fundamentally rhetorical actions that have a potential to effect wider societal change.

Jasper (2007) argues that images of animals used in animal rights rhetoric “have a simple but effective structure based on good versus evil” (p. 174). Some images depict happy animals (in nature or in homes) and others present unhappy animals (clearly in pain or being exploited). The contrast between the images is striking, and is explained in the text accompanying the images. Baker (2001) is the author who has most thoroughly investigated the visual rhetorical strategies used in animal rights activism. He identified four specific strategies that are used in animal rights rhetoric to frame the issue of animal abuse. The first strategy consists of portraying “positive” conceptions of the animal.²³ This proposes an aesthetically appealing photographic depiction of animals in their natural environment. Animals are said to be presented in a context devoid of human interaction (or exploitation) “in the way they are meant to be seen” (p. 190). The second strategy outlined by Baker strikingly counterpoints the positive depiction of the animals. Aesthetic concerns are forgone and viewers are instead presented with unpleasant and repulsive documentary images. The animal abuse is clearly depicted, but most importantly, the subject (or *victim*) seems to have been furtively photographed. The photograph—be it its setting or its quality—emphasises the clandestine nature of the animal abuse. The viewer is forced to consider that “within this narrow band of the evidential image there is something more complex going on” (p. 221) and that there is an

²³ It should be noted that Baker (2001) strongly doubts the rhetorical efficiency of the positive image of the animal, noting that “[t]here are three problems with this notion of animals *as they should be seen*, and each concerns the relation of the images such as these to all of the other animal images already in circulation” (p. 190) also noting that their use seems “to be antithetical to the interests of animal rights (p. 194) (see Baker, 2001).

even wider social imaginary that remains unobserved. The unseen carries a much greater symbolic force than the images themselves:

The documentary image is openly put to work as propaganda [...] in the knowledge that the ‘reality’ of the event to which it attests is the least persuasive of its pictorial attributes. The literal, the real, is an altogether *thinner* thing than its symbolic elaboration, either in or out of the picture.

(Baker, 2001, p. 222)

The two remaining strategies proposed by Baker (2001) consist of removing the animal from its myth of nature in an attempt to blur our conception of the body and its association to identity. Baker notes that there are “two classes of imagery which deliberately blur this vital distinction and render it less visible”. The first is anthropomorphism (seen extensively in earlier discussion) while the second is *therianthropism*. Therianthropism (from the Greek *theríon*, meaning “beast” and *anthrōpos*, meaning “human being”) refers explicitly to the notion of half human and half animal, and alludes in this case to the idea of “combining the form of a beast with that of a man” and the “casting of humans into animal forms” (Baker, 2001, p. 108). In such cases, according to Baker:

We are not shown the animal suffering; we are shown a human treated *like an animal*. If we describe this anomalous image as grotesque the word implies no distaste for the animal but rather an acknowledgement of the preposterousness of this human imposition on its features [...and] opens our own eyes to the reality of an *unpictured* animal suffering. (Baker, 2001, p. 124-126)

Baker discusses the application of therianthropism as a rhetorical tool that deprives human beings of their body's identity, integrity and propriety by portraying them to be "other than wholly human, but [also] as *less than* wholly human. Visually lending the human body to the representation of animal plight sheds a different light on the treatment of animality. Baker (2001) refers to a photograph of a young man, whose face is contorted by a large metal ring going through his nose, as an example of therianthropism (p. 224). This is an image that attempts to draw attention to the cruelty of Spanish bullfighting and, although only a human is shown, the focus of the photograph is the unpictured bull, whose plight is fully represented in the image. It is unarguable that the image does not make a case for the victimisation of the human that is featured, but refers to the symbolic violence inflicted upon an animal.

While significant theoretical work has been allotted to the persuasive efforts of the animal rights movements, relatively little attention has been provided to the reactionary movements that emerge to oppose the activist efforts (Munro, 1999, p. 35). Klandermans (1990), in his analysis of activism in the Netherlands, emphasises the importance of studying the phenomenon of social activism within a multi-organisational context, in order to acknowledge the existence of countermovements as significant actors in the shaping of public opinion. More specifically, Klandermans (1990) calls for a multi-organisational understanding of the phenomenon, in which two systems interact: the alliance system (comprised of supporters of activist movements) and the conflict system (consisting of those who oppose the movements). Klandermans identifies three strategies employed by these opponents to undermine "the moral and political bases of [a] social movement organization" (p. 128). They consist of aiming to criminalise the movements

and their activities and weaken their organisational strength, as well as of resorting to the use of repression, threats, anti-propaganda, and litigation (p. 128).

Mottl (1980) theorised that the countermovements' persuasive strategies differed from those of the animal rights movements, largely on the basis that they seek to mobilise human, material, and symbolic resources against the social movement, but neglect to utilise moral resources such as feelings and emotions (p. 631). As a result of this, countermovements often fail to articulate an adequate and convincing retort to the efforts of activist movements. However, others (Munro, 1999; Groves, 2001) have argued that countermovements have effectively appropriated techniques and strategies typically used by activist movements to influence public opinion. Munro (1999), in his study of animal activism in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, found that the positions advocated by animal rights groups were frequently and forcefully disputed by organised countermovements. The countermovements' efforts were largely "characterized by the common rhetorical strategy of survivalist anthropocentrism" (Munro, 1999, p. 40), thereby promoting an ethic that defends the primacy of human rights and well-being over animal rights and appeals to the "inclinations of ordinary people to put their interests before those of other animals" (Munro, 1999, p. 50). Furthermore, these campaigns contested the moral capital that the animal rights movements had attributed to their cause through a series of rhetorical strategies, including appeals to emotion, and the condemnation and vilification of the activists by using such terms as "terrorists" and "extremists" (Munro, 1999, p. 50). Munro (1999) also found that some of the countermovements' campaigns appropriated tactics that were typically used by animal rights groups, including direct mail, public protests and the use of upsetting images,

including some of “suffering innocents ranging from sick children to long-suffering farmers and country folk” (p. 50).

Jasper (2007), in studying movements and countermovements, found that the interplay between both parties often settles and takes on rigid patterns. Each party learns “what it can about favorable moves, innovates or fends off all opponents’ innovations, then settles into a standard repertory of tactics” (p. 309), usually leading to predictable rhetorical patterns. Also, a sense of enmity and paranoia tends to build during lengthy conflict, sometimes to the degree of interfering with strategic action (Jasper, 2007, p. 309). Finally, Jasper and Poulsen (1993) find that the nature of countermovements makes their rhetorical strategies reactionary, to a large extent, especially when they are compelled to contest the claims of animal rights activists. A central part of the countermovements’ strategies is to respond adequately to the claims they oppose within a framework of crisis management. Jasper and Poulsen (1993) discuss here the notions of organisational *vulnerabilities* and *blunders*. They use “the term ‘vulnerability’ for pre-existing conditions (even if they are only brought to light during the controversy), and use the term ‘blunder’ for actions taken in response to criticism” (p. 642). Animal rights groups try to expose the vulnerability or weaknesses of the countermovement, so as to diminish its reputation or cast doubt upon its benevolence. Meanwhile, much of the countermovement’s efforts are focussed on avoiding blunders or mistakes in their strategic responses to the movements, so as to not worsen the public perception associated with them.

2.4 *The Case of the Seal Hunt*

Let us shift our focus to the matter of the animal rights movements and countermovements in relation to the CSH, in order to understand how literature has framed the public discourse between the anti-CSH groups and the pro-CSH Canadian government. It is worth noting that very little academic focus has been allotted to the issue of the CSH, most specifically in the last two decades. However, I propose to discuss three texts which can assist us in discerning trends in the academic study of the rhetoric of the CSH.

The first text, written by Panaccio (1979), proposes a methodological framework for an axiological analysis of moral debate. He explores the CSH mostly as a case study of the public articulation of ideological arguments, yet he proposes a preliminary analysis of the articulation of the CSH debate. He finds that the arguments articulated on both sides of the issue can be sorted into four logical categories pertaining to: actions, actors (“agents” in French), intentions and emotions. Furthermore, each argument can be identified as holding a laudable or condemnable stance towards each category (i.e. actions, actors, intentions and emotions can each be considered laudable or condemnable). More significantly, Panaccio argues that there are four fundamental *evaluative postulates* widespread within the community studied.²⁴ They serve as a type of argumentative *a priori*, or a set of judgements and values that are culturally-specific and common to both advocates and opponents of the hunt:

(Postulate 1) *Endangering the survival of an animal species is condemnable.*

(Postulate 2) *Making a living being suffer is condemnable.*

²⁴ While this community is not made explicit by Panaccio, he uses as a methodological corpus letters from the public submitted to two Quebec newspapers (*le Devoir* and *le Soleil*) and two books, one written by a Quebecois author and the other by a French journalist (1979, p. 48).

(Postulate 3) *Earning a living by the sweat of your brow is laudable.*

(Postulate 4) *Not minding our own business is condemnable.*

(Adapted from Panaccio, 1979, p. 57)

With this in mind, Panaccio writes:

The fact that in all of these arguments, the evaluative postulates and the rules of inference are common to both parties, suggests that the proponents and opponents of the seal hunt share—at least to a certain extent—the *same ideology*. The arguments herein considered oppose one another, but they do not imply an evaluative disagreement. All of the divergences are materialised in how to best *describe* the litigious acts and their consequences. (my translation, Panaccio, 1979, p. 60)²⁵

Therefore, the arguments put forth largely reflect the four postulates and coherently use them to organise an argumentation. Panaccio finds that, to a great extent, the ability of arguments to be convincing (at least to the community in question) ultimately depends on whether they abide and appeal to these four culturally-held beliefs (p. 57).

The second text, by Lee (1989), looked at the words used in interventions from the proponents and opponents of the CSH in two Canadian newspapers (*Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star*). He refers to a “war of words” that is waged between three groups: “1) pro-hunt groups and organizations, 2) anti-hunt groups, [and] 3) third parties, such as governments, courts and universities” (p. 41). A quantitative content analysis and a

²⁵ Translated from the original French: « Le fait que dans tous ces arguments, les postulats évaluatifs et les règles d'inférence soient communs aux deux parties suggère que partisans et adversaires de la chasse partagent — jusqu'à un certain point du moins — la *même idéologie*. Les arguments considérés jusqu'ici s'opposent les uns aux autres, mais ils n'impliquent aucun désaccord évaluatif. Les divergences tiennent toutes à la question de savoir comment il convient de *décrire* les actes litigieux et leurs conséquences. » (Panaccio, 1979, p. 60).

qualitative interpretation of moral keywords revealed that “[w]ord-warriors often get carried away by their own rhetoric, and lose sight of the legitimate concerns that the words originally addressed” (p. 51). Both proponents and opponents of the CSH use metaphors and try to advance their own conception of the seals, the hunt and the hunters. Lee (1989) notes that the anti-CSH movement tends to provide an idealised conception of seals by overwhelmingly referring to them as “baby seals” and emphasising their standing as defenceless and innocent creatures. On the other hand, those who support the CSH—including groups that advocate for sealing, fishing, and the fur trade as well as the Canadian government—tend to portray seals as being pests, and parasites, as well as stupid and dangerous animals (p. 49-52)

Lastly, Lamson (1979) presents a deductive study on the verbal and visual articulations of a countermovement (she refers to it as “counter-protest”) and looks at the grassroots efforts of residents of the province of Newfoundland to counteract the anti-CSH efforts of animal rights activists in the 1970s. She conducts an analysis of letters to newspapers, caricatures and graphic cartoons, as well as several oral testimonies originally delivered in the context of an open-line radio program. Lamson notes that organised groups and the Canadian government have an organisational obligation to remain composed in their replies to animal rights groups and tend to resort to statistics and rationality. However, she posits that ordinary citizens of Newfoundland allow themselves to be openly angry and use a rhetoric that is permeated with emotion. In fact, while “the government campaign sought to contradict the protesters’ charges with authoritative evidence, counter-protest by individuals relied on testimonials (eye-witness accounts and personal reminiscences)” (Lamson, 1979, p. 11). The strategy that the

counter-protesters formulated was based on five main arguments. The first argument is that of the economic necessity of the hunt, which provides basic income to an already impoverished community. The second highlights the importance of the seal hunt as a traditional practice that connects modern life in Newfoundland to its cultural roots. The third appeals to the occupational hazards brought on by the anti-CSH protesters, which make already perilous sealing conditions more dangerous. The fourth argument is that of ecological responsibility, and alludes to the ecological benefits brought on by killing seals, most significantly in reducing the natural threats to the cod stocks. The fifth and last argument calls for a divine sanction of the hunt, and posits that the use of animals to satisfy human needs fits within a biblical conception of the world (p. 11). Lamson (1979) argues that the counter-protest to the CSH in Newfoundland most significantly deals with a question of the self-image of the province and a loyalty with regards to community ties (p. 20).

2.5 Research Questions

The matter of the CSH rhetoric, and more broadly the theme of representation of animal rights, has deep-seeded roots in the western philosophical tradition's proclivity for defining the human and animal's identity as being fundamentally disconnected and irreversibly different from one another. In fact, the traditional Cartesian opposition between subject and object (whereas humans are said to be fully sentient subjects and animals inferiorly characterised as mere objects or things) provides an adequate conceptual foundation for understanding the themes of anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism arising from a review of the literature on the representation of animals. Furthermore, there exists a wide literature that highlights the importance of studying

social polemics through the coexisting actions and efforts of social movements and countermovements alike. This body of literature further considers the rhetorical interplay that frames societal debates and studies the ways in which movements and countermovements articulate their positions, and construct conflicting interpretations of a crisis. In turning our attention to the case of the CSH, we see that the literature highlights the polemical undertones of the issue, but its limited scope hints at a need to discuss the matter from a contemporary perspective and to consider the rhetorical approaches of social movements and their countermovement concurrently, so as to provide a holistic conceptual understanding of the discourse that dominates the CSH. In this sense, two main research questions have been developed in order to guide an analysis of the persuasive strategies employed by the anti-CSH movement and the pro-CSH Canadian government within a theoretical framework based on semiotic and rhetoric:

- How do the anti-CSH movement and the Canadian government communicate their positions on the CSH through persuasive discourses, using words and images? How are differences between the positions articulated through rhetorical strategies and persuasive techniques?
- Does a difference exist between the visual and textual articulations of the arguments within the persuasive discourses of a single position? How is this difference manifested?

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 *Visuality and Textuality*

Providing answers to the research questions requires the analysis of both textual and visual data. It is important, however, to first consider how the simultaneous study of visual and textual data can be approached and how the diverging natures of these types of documents will be used complementarily to form a cohesive analysis. First, while it was previously discussed that traditional conceptions of rhetoric considered that its purest manifestations were found in orality and textuality²⁶, the rationale for the study of visual rhetoric expresses a significantly different premise. In fact, visual rhetoric assumes primacy of the visual message over textual and oral messages, as well as the intrinsic and unique ability of the former to exert influence on a public. The superior rhetorical force of the image has been argued by several authors, even indirectly so by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca as early as 1971. They note that, in rhetorical terms, objects and elements are endowed with a *presence*, defined as the degree to which they are brought to the forefront of the argument (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, p. 116). In that sense, “things present, things near to us in space and time, act directly on our sensibility” and rhetoric can simulate this presence (Perelman, 2001, p. 1395). Hill (2004) argues that images—and even, to a lesser extent, imagistic language—replicate proximity and possess a presence, a realness and a vividness that appeal to human emotion (p. 28-32). Similarly, the propensity of the visual for persuasion, according to Blair (2004), lies in the fact that it is embedded with “an immediacy, a verisimilitude, and a concreteness that help influence acceptance and that are not available to the verbal” (p. 59). In other words,

²⁶ See section 2.1.2

these components are intrinsic to the nature of the image and help it exert a rhetorical power that is unrivalled in verbal forms of rhetoric.

It is no surprise, then, that the efficacy of the campaigns of the animal rights movement and anti-CSH groups has largely been attributed to their tactical reliance on visual communication (Barry, 2005; Jasper and Nelkin, 1992). We are now left to wonder whether an evaluation of the textual dimension of the CSH debate is even necessary, as this concern may seem superfluous in a public debate that has historically been dominated by visuality. However, it is important to consider that, in certain instances, the Canadian government typically shies away from communication campaigns based on visual elements, and has a predilection for articulating its campaigns textually or by using an informational tone (Rose, 2000, p. 73). Most notably, when conducting communication campaigns on highly contentious issues, the Canadian government tends to put forth rational arguments (as opposed to ethical or emotional arguments), in an attempt to gain the trust of a highly wary and cynical public. Thereby, the government attempts to influence public opinion while crafting its image as one of a sober, neutral and objective party (Rose, 2000, p. 95-96)²⁷. Similarly, DFO has recognised that it tends to formulate its position regarding the CSH with words and numbers, believing that facts, data, and rational arguments come to its defence, while the realm of images and emotions typically operate in its disfavour (Carrier-Lafontaine, 2007, p. 12). Finally, it is worth noting that internal policies relating to departmental use of images displayed on official government websites impose several restrictions related to the use of images. Parameters

²⁷ Conversely, the Canadian government tends to delve into the ethical or emotional realm of arguments when it is dealing with positions that benefit from significant popular support (i.e. campaigns against drinking and driving) (Rose, 2000, p. 95). It is considered here, as previously indicated in an overview of recent public opinion polls, that the CSH remains a highly contentious issue, even within Canada.

are established for colour contrasts in order to ensure accessibility for the visually-impaired and loading-time restrictions are set to accommodate users with limited bandwidth, thereby limiting the ease with which images can be used (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2007). In keeping this organisational context in mind, it was deemed likely that DFO would rely chiefly on a textual argumentation in the matter of the CSH. The methodology of this study would be remiss if it failed to take into account both visual and textual elements of the CSH, and would not succeed in providing an accurate and complete depiction of the animal rights movement and the Canadian government's rhetorical strategies. This research therefore employed a conception of the visual-textual relationship as one that entails an essentially complementary dyad. In this sense, it was understood that an argumentation would be articulated by using visual and textual elements in a parallel manner. While room was left for observing inconsistencies or divergences between visual and textual messages, it was chiefly considered that words often times complete what images cannot say or develop what has already been said through them (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994). In this respect, the combination of visual material and printed text constitutes an integral aspect of the understanding of meaning and both should be understood as two complementary elements of one overarching, and to an extent, complete, rhetorical message (Horstkotte, 2008).

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Direct Analysis Model

This study adopted a theoretical framework based on semiotic and rhetorical approaches and was therefore fundamentally qualitative in nature. It employed an inductive mode of reasoning, in that the project was best suited to an open-ended and exploratory process, thereby making for a flexible research methodology that took into account the data in a way that promoted the development of theories. Also, the thesis used a macroconceptual approach, in that a holistic method is employed by investigating the strategies of specific institutions and organisations (McLoed & Tichenor, 2007, p. 14). This research project used an adaptation of the model for direct analysis²⁸ set out by van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001), which provides a general roadmap to proceed with the evaluation of the character and content of images in a way that allows the flexibility of utilising rhetoric and semiotic as analytical tools (p. 38). Although the direct analysis model is more specifically designed for the study of visual materials, the study of textual elements was also conducted using the same method, as the textual elements and visual elements were construed as two essential and overlapping parts of the communication strategies. The model for direct analysis allowed for a study of visual and textual elements in a way that still facilitated the open-ended nature of the inductive process, ultimately offering “an opportunity to respond to larger patterns within the whole that may reveal the new and unforeseen, that provide significant meaning to otherwise chaotic details” (p. 39). The direct analysis model proposes a methodology based on four stages.

²⁸ Direct analysis, here, is different from an indirect analysis, in that the former considers the images as the data while the latter qualitatively examines individuals’ responses or recollections brought on by images (van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001, p. 39-47).

The first stage consists of observing the data as part of a whole, in a way that allows the researcher to introspectively take into account impressions and feelings brought on by the images, as a stepping stone towards the observation of patterns. The second stage entails the assembling of an inventory, or in the case of this study, libraries, that will assist in collecting and later analysing the data. The third stage encompasses the structuring of the analysis, which requires the use of research questions to evaluate the data and to generate detailed accounts. The fourth and final stage, which attempts to draw conclusions, calls for a return to the complete visual inventory in an “open manner so that details from structured analysis can be placed in a context that defines their significance” (p. 39).

3.2.1 Sampling

The data subject to analysis was restricted by a purposive sample that consisted of “all possible cases that fit particular criteria, using various methods” (Neuman, 2006, p. 346). The population studied was the totality of communication materials recently created by the animal rights movement and the Canadian government relating to the CSH. First, the sampling was restricted to the English-language promotional material published by two animal rights groups and one department of the Canadian government. The two animal rights groups chosen were the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS). These non-profit organisations were selected on the basis that the literature identifies them as being significant actors in the anti-CSH movement (Barry, 2005; Jasper and Nelkin, 1992; Lee, 1989). Furthermore, an initial census of the animal rights movement’s communication campaigns indicated that both the IFAW and SSCS had been especially active in the anti-CSH cause in the recent

past, and had framed their opposition to the CSH as one of their few flagship issues.²⁹

The government's pro-CSH position was studied by looking at the efforts of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), the federal department tasked with managing the CSH and promoting its image.

The purposive sampling method was also extended to the communication materials created by the IFAW, SSCS and DFO. The study was restricted to visual and textual elements that were included in the official websites³⁰ of the organisations studied, as well as to the official news releases that they created, which were available online. It was estimated that all of these sources constituted an appropriate reflection of the textual and visual argumentation processes utilised by the organisations. It is worth noting that this study excluded from the analysis videos used in websites, chiefly to accommodate the limited scope of the thesis and to counter the significant difficulty involved in effectively and accurately monitoring these types of messages. Lastly, the purposive sampling was also extended to the time period from which the data was taken. Since the research aimed to look at the argumentative processes used in the recent past, the study encompassed communication materials that were online from March 1, 2008 to May 31, 2009. This period of 15 months was deemed to be of sufficient length to provide a valid reflection of the recent communication strategies pertaining to the CSH. In addition, this

²⁹ Certainly, there are other groups that are currently or have historically opposed the CSH, most notably Greenpeace and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Greenpeace has been opposed to the CSH and has remained a significant actor in the fight against the CSH. However, its efforts have been tempered in the last decades, to the point that disaffected members, led by Greenpeace co-founder Paul Watson, deemed Greenpeace's non-intrusive approach to be insufficient and formed SSCS in 1977 (Long, 2004, p. 26). This new group pursued a "more radical brand of direct action" that focussed on marine life and has become known for actively disturbing sealing activities (Long, 2004, p. 146). Also, PETA have been resilient in their opposition to the CSH, but deal with a multitude of perceived instances of cruelty against animals, thereby mitigating their focus on this specific cause.

³⁰ DFO: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca; IFAW: www.ifaw.org, and more specifically www.stopthesealhunt.com; and SSCS: www.seashepherd.org

period has allowed the research to deal with two different sealing seasons, as well as the weeks that precede and follow them, when increased attention from the animal rights movement corresponds to greater activity from the Canadian government. As it should be expected when studying an issue dealing with current societal debates, a number of events unfolded during the period studied, in which renewed media attention on the CSH corresponded with increased activity from the organisations. Most significantly, in March 2008, a deadly accident occurred at sea, in which four sealers were killed. Then, in April 2008, DFO accused SSCS of breaking the law through the disruption sealing activities and seized its ship, the Farley Mowat, and arrested two of its members. Also, in May 2009, the EU Parliament voted to unilaterally ban the importation of seal-based products.

3.3 Data Collection

As part of the requirements of the second stage of the direct analysis model (van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001, p. 38-46), which entails the creation of an inventory of data propitious to an effective analysis, a logging system that incorporated both visual and textual elements was implemented. In order to collect and safely preserve the information, two data libraries were created using electronic spreadsheets. *Library A* was used to store visual documents and *Library B* for textual documents. Each library was then divided into three sections, each corresponding to a specific organisation studied (IFAW, SSCS and DFO). This was done especially to ensure that the information made available to the general public would be gathered progressively and systematically throughout the fifteen month window. In turn, creating the libraries ensured that the information published on the websites would remain available for the analysis, even if it were to be removed by the websites' publishers at a later time. The most significant part of the libraries was built in the early phases of the project, but they progressively grew as

additional data was published. To ensure the completeness and the integrity of both libraries, the websites of the IFAW, SSCS and DFO were monitored on a semimonthly basis, and newly-added information was catalogued in the libraries.

Library A, which dealt with the visual elements of the websites, contained links to the image that were saved in the computer, as well as other information that was deemed potentially relevant to the eventual analysis of the image. This included the link to the web page, the date of retrieval, the date of publishing (if available) and the caption of the image (if available). In the event that an image accompanied a specific text, it would be cross-referenced with the appropriate entry from *Library B*. Overall; the library of images contained 252 photographs or graphic elements (see Figure 2 for details).

Library B was used to compile the textual elements of the websites and contained links to the texts that were saved separately in the computer. Each entry was accompanied by a link to the corresponding web page, as well as information that may be relevant to its analysis, such as the nature of the text (press release or otherwise), the date of retrieval and the date of publishing (if available). Also, if the text had been accompanied by one image or more, it would be cross-referenced to the specific entry or entries from *Library A*. A total of 158 textual documents were identified: 72 of them corresponded to news releases and the remaining 86 corresponded to miscellaneous web documents, including fact sheets, frequently asked questions, information pages, etc. (see Figure 2 for details). The two libraries effectively built a large corpus of documents that were considered to be an exhaustive account of the online visual and textual strategies and press releases of the three organisations, within limits set out by the purposive sample.

Figure 2: Data collected

DATA		DFO	IFAW	SSCS	TOTAL
Library A <i>Visual</i>		14	105	133	252
Library B <i>Textual</i>	News releases	21	19	32	72
	Other documents	16	39	31	86
	Total	37	58	63	158
TOTAL		51	163	196	410

3.4 Data Analysis

As required in the third stage of the direct analysis model (van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001, 38-46), the data collected in the previous stage was structured using a defined set of observable criteria. To this end, the research questions were operationalised and a grid was developed to facilitate the analysis. The grid was ultimately developed to address the general themes identified in the research questions. It included categories and concepts that were defined after an initial overview of the data that was to be collected—to ensure a general understanding of the material—but also after a careful synthesis of key findings in the review of literature. However, in keeping with the inductive character of the study, the grid was created with the expectation that it would evolve and change as trends emerged through the analysis of the collected data.

A thorough articulation of the concepts found in the grid can be traced to the literature review (Chapter 2), where concepts pertaining to the rhetoric of animal rights and the CSH were discussed extensively. In summary, it was initially found that the polemic surrounding the CSH would best be discussed on four different levels: (1) representations of the seal; (2) representations of the kill; (3) representations of the

sealers; and finally (4) representations of the adversary. By adversary, I propose here to interpret the polemic nature of the CSH debate to be one in which two groups (the animal rights movement and the Canadian government) exist in a fundamental ideological discordance where each opposes the actions of the other (see Barry, 2005 for a discussion of the opposition between IFAW and DFO). In that sense, and following the literature on social movements and countermovements, each party attempts to gain public favour by framing the other in a negative light. As the analysis went forward, it was found that this fourth category needed to be revised, as the data clearly showed that the representation of the adversary was done in concert with the representation of the self, or in other words, how the movement and countermovement represented their own actions and motives. Furthermore, a fifth pattern emerged from the data and it was found that the (5) representation of the sealing communities (more specifically coastal communities in the province of Newfoundland and in the area of the Magdalen Islands in the province of Quebec) needed to be taken into consideration. This revision to the fourth category and the additional fifth category were therefore added to the analysis grid (see Appendix A for the initial grid and Appendix B for the revised grid, which was used for the analysis).

Furthermore, as discussed at length in Chapter 2, the phenomenological understanding of the animal is one that has been largely shaped by its perceived relationship to the human. In that sense, literature pertaining to the interpretation of the human-animal relationship corresponds to a philosophical tradition that has seen the animal's identity navigate extensively along an ideological axis of *subject:object*. Imagining animals as subjects has been associated with their preservation, while imagining them as objects has been linked to their commodification.

Chapter 4 – Results and Discussion

Through the analysis of the data, significant trends emerged, predictably forming an opposition between the arguments stemming from the animal rights groups (IFAW and SSCS) and those of the Canadian government (DFO). The most relevant analytical result of the debate surrounding the hunt was a fundamentally diverging construction of nature, which in turn resulted in two deeply contradictory conceptions of the seal, that saw its identity oscillate along an axis of *subject:object*. Then, several somewhat less prominent, albeit noteworthy, rhetorical articulations were identified, specifically the conceptions of the hunt, the sealers and the adversary and the self. The following figure provides an overview of the results.

Figure 3: Final Results Grid

Pro-CSH	Anti-CSH
Seals	
<i>As objects</i>	<i>As subjects</i>
Appearance	
No cuteness	Cuteness
Human Iconicity	
Reinforcement of animality (animalising narrative, seals as dangerous)	Anthropomorphism (intrinsic value, humanising narrative and as pets)
Singularity	
Public distance	Personal/intimate distance
Seals as part of a herd	Seals as unique
No gaze (propriety)	Gaze (impropriety)
Utility	
Useful as objects	Useless as objects
Useless as subjects	Useful as subjects
Kill	
As a means to an end	As final, irrevocable
Important benefits (economic, cultural, production of commodities)	Impending Death
	Moral Shocks
Sealers	
Within a humanising context	As sadistic
As having traditional values	As primitive
Sealing Communities	
As sealers	As sealers

Self vs. Adversary	
Animal rights movement	
Aggressors/extremists	Protectors (of seals)
Demagogues	Weak
Financially-motivated	
Canadian Government	
Protectors (of sealers)	Aggressors
Responsible	Demagogues
	Politically-motivated

4.1 The Seal

The analysis of the data demonstrated that within a social constructionist framework, there was an absence of a univocal representation of nature within the CSH polemic. Rather, there existed many interpretations of nature and of the human’s place within it, which led to diverging and often contradictory conceptions of what the human being’s interaction with the seal should be. The interpretations pertaining to the identity of the seal proved to be the central element in the discourse of the CSH. Two very different social constructions³¹ of the seal were put forth. The first awarded to it an intrinsic value, a right to be kept alive and ultimately considered it to be a subject. The other found the seal to be an animal that could legitimately be killed, commodified, and treated as an object. The focus on the articulation of the identity of the seal was found to be most prevalent in the case of the anti-CHS movement, and it similarly remained a significant element in DFO’s strategy, thereby creating a rich dialogue of text and images in which the nature of the seal is discussed and negotiated rhetorically. It was also found that the visual and textual elements within similar rhetorical strategies were largely coherent, although some aspects of the seal’s identity were more significantly

³¹ “Social construction” refers here to Wapner’s (2002) definition, which considers it to be “an entity that assumes meaning within various cultural contexts and is fundamentally unknowable outside human categories of understanding” (p. 167).

disseminated either through visuality or textuality. The analysis of the data identified four recurring trends which were deemed to encompass the discourse on the identity of the seal in the documents published by IFAW, SSCS and DFO: specifically the themes of the appearance of the seal, its human iconicity (or how the seal's identity is discussed through its relation to humans), its singularity and its utility.

4.1.1 Appearance

It was discussed in Chapter 2 that the propensity for humans to feel protective of other species largely depends on the animal's classification and the degree to which it resembles humans. Animals that are most similar to humans, such as mammals, are likely to be held in higher regard than those that are more unlike humans, such as reptiles, fish and invertebrates (Paul, 1996). Morreall (1991) also addresses this phenomenon and posits that humans tend to recognise, in certain animals, physiognomic traits that are also fundamental to the human species. More specifically, humans are evolutionarily conditioned to protect human babies: the young of the species that share physical commonalities with them are therefore biologically predisposed to benefit from the protection of human beings. Likewise, certain species, such as the panda and the koala, tend to preserve the infant's characteristics throughout adult life, making them more likely recipients of human sympathy. This set of observable commonalities between infants and the young of animals, which Morreall describes as cuteness, are fundamental components of the pup seal's physicality, thereby rendering it especially akin in appearance to a human baby. The representation of the seal as a cute animal is a trend that is prevalent in the rhetorical strategy of IFAW and SSCS. As well, references to cuteness are most observable in the visual documents and are generally absent from the

textual depictions of seals. Conversely, DFO omits to represent the cuteness of the seal by not depicting the animal visually or by opting to illustrate those that have few visible cuteness identifiers.

Figure 4: Whitecoat (from IFAW)



Pup seals (including whitecoats and beaters) most clearly possess the infantile features described by Lorenz (1971) as cuteness, including a large head in relation to the body, a large forehead, eyes set low on the head, a rounded body shape, short and thick extremities, a distinctively soft body surface and a weak and clumsy behaviour (Lorenz, 1971 as quoted in Morreall, 1991, p. 42). These characteristics are even more prevalent in whitecoats, which are smaller, have more rounded bodies, larger heads in relation to their bodies, less refined motor skills, and a soft pale coat. Furthermore, the whiteness of the seal creates a significant contrast with its facial features, making its child-like wide eyes more easily discernable. As discussed in Chapter 1, whitecoats have not been legally hunted in Canada since 1987 and the slightly older beaters represent the main target of the hunt. Whitecoats remain nonetheless an integral component of the visual strategy of both IFAW and SSCS, on the basis of their high degree of cuteness and their propensity to instigate human sympathy (Figure 4). A sizeable portion of the images depicting seals from IFAW and SSCS contain whitecoats,³² and nearly all the seals appearing in photographs were quite young (either whitecoats or beaters). Adult seals

³² In the 106 pictures studied from both anti-CSH groups which depicted seals (alive or dead), nearly half of them (48) depicted whitecoats. Furthermore, when only looking at photographs depicting seals without interference from hunters (thereby excluding dead seals, seals about to be killed and seals near carcasses or blood), most of them (46 of 77) featured whitecoats.

were shown very rarely, and when they were, they tended to be photographed interacting with whitecoats. It can be said that the elements of cuteness inherent to the seal's physiognomy are chiefly disseminated visually. Neither IFAW nor SSCS describe the seals' cuteness identifiers, or even categorise them as "cute" or "adorable". However, they used textual depiction of cuteness identifiers in instances when they were related to the seal's behaviour. For example, the features of clumsiness and weakness, which are linked to the animal's movement and are therefore not easily conveyed through still photographs, are mentioned in the textual descriptions of the seals. IFAW writes that seals were "using their little claws to awkwardly pull themselves across the slippery ice" to get away from hunters, thereby emphasising textually the clumsiness and the weakness of the animal.

While harp seals of all ages retain some of the cuteness identifiers listed by Lorenz, this species is quite different from the panda and koala, in that the animal's physiognomy changes quite drastically over its lifetime. DFO, in turn, capitalises on the seal's changing appearance, and opts to depict older creatures, that are seldom the target of the hunt since their coat is less desirable. In stark contrast with the images used by IFAW and SSCS, DFO does not portray whitecoats in any of its images. In fact, over the period studied, DFO depicts the physical features of the seal only minimally, thereby ultimately avoiding the visual depiction of the hunted animal. It published two images in which seals were in proximity to the camera, and therefore possessed identifiable physical characteristics.³³ The first image, which was removed before the start of the 2009 hunt, was that of a beater. This image, however, is inconspicuous: it is small, devoid of colour, and placed in a page header along with three other images. The second image

³³ The proximity of the subject to the camera will be discussed in greater detail in section 4.1.3.

(Figure 5), which held a much more prominent position on the site's main page and was added in time for the 2009 hunt, is that of clearly older seals, or dark harps, which retain very few of the cuteness indicators

outlined by Lorenz (1971). The seals are clearly much more imposing. They possess small heads in relation to their bodies, which are in turn elongated. Their eyes are hardly noticeable and are placed high on their heads, they have a

Figure 5: Dark Harp (from DFO)



rougher coat, and do not seem to possess the clumsiness and weakness associated with the pup.

The data showed that the anti-CSH movement tended to depict seals much more frequently than did the Canadian government. Interestingly, both the anti-CSH movement and the Canadian government tended to select photographs of seals that are not typically targeted in the CSH, thereby each capitalising on the abundance or the absence of cuteness indicators associated with extremes in the seals' ages. Whitecoats, which are newborn seals, possess a high degree of cuteness indicators and are most similar to infants. They are therefore used in situations where the goal is to entice the protection of the animal. On the other hand, older dark harps, which have a comparatively low degree of cuteness indicators and have little in common with human babies, are depicted in instances where the hunt is cast in a positive light, therefore mitigating the human's susceptibility to protect the species.

4.1.2 Human Iconicity: Negotiating Humanness and Wildness

The representation of the seal by the anti-CSH movement most extensively described the seal's human iconicity, while the opposite was found in the case of the Canadian government. This phenomenon will be studied with the understanding that signs function as icons through a quality that they possess independently from the object, which they happen to resemble. In that sense, the following will analyse the degree to which signs that are displayed by or associated with seals resemble or stand for humanity. This will be done first through the concept of anthropomorphism, in that it was found that the anti-CSH movement tended to represent the identity of the seal in reference to humanity. Then, the reinforcement of the animality of the seal will be considered, in that DFO avoids the use of humanity to create the seal's identity and instead uses signs that iconically refer to animality.

4.1.2.1 Anthropomorphism. It was found that a significant portion of the documents published by SSCS and IFAW frequently employed an anthropomorphic discourse. This was done most specifically through their texts, and also, in different ways, through their images. The anthropomorphism of the visual representation of the seal was seen to operate in three major aspects. First, certain strategies were seen to elevate the perceived value of the seal so that it is considered equal or even superior to that of the human, thereby challenging the institutionalised superiority of humans over animals. Then, typically human characteristics were transposed onto seals, so as to affix to their identity and plight a narrative to which humans can relate. The final aspect of the anthropomorphism finds seals to be likened to domestic animals. I consider that likening seals to pets accurately falls within the anthropomorphic strategy on the basis of two

elements: (a) the wild animal is made to appear domesticated and an established fixture of the human realm and (b) seals are ultimately being compared to species that have already been profoundly anthropomorphised and that permanently oscillate between the realms of animality and humanity.³⁴

Let us discuss in more detail the first of the three uses of anthropomorphic discourses by the anti-CSH movement. It was mentioned earlier that the Western philosophical tradition has generally produced a fundamentally dualist conception of the human-animal relationship: one that finds the human to be ontologically different and in almost every way superior to the animal.³⁵ This tradition has provided an ideological legitimisation for the practice and acceptance of the human's dominion over nature. Textual and visual documents used by the SSCS and IFAW were found to significantly cast doubt upon this order and to award to a seal's life the intrinsic value that is commonly attributed to humans. First, both groups resort to using personal pronouns when referring to a specific seal, indicative of a practice that is common when verbally referring to humans. For instance, IFAW writes "One small pup hidden amongst the rafted up ice looked at me nervously. I tried not to look back - by doing so I would give *her* location away to the sealers" (emphasis added). In this specific situation, the seal is referred to as "her", not only attributing to it personhood, but also assigning a gender, in circumstances in which doing so accurately would prove to be difficult and even doubtful. It is SSCS, however, that most directly and openly discusses the identity of the seal, specifically redefining its relation to humanity. For instance, SSCS repeatedly describes the seals as "lambs", an analogy that is used more prominently and frequently

³⁴ For a discussion on the humanness of domesticated animals, see Serpell, 1995, p. 254.

³⁵ See section 2.2.

than any other in the textual documents. This association of the seal to a lamb significantly highlights the innocence and specialness of the species and its dependence upon a shepherd for protection (SSCS members also refer to themselves as “shepherds of the seals”). The anthropomorphic nature of the analogy of the seal to the lamb is made more explicit in the instances where seals are called in the textual documents, more unequivocally, “lambs of God”. This prompts a curious transformation of the therianthropic metaphor of humans (or Jesus) as lambs into a profoundly anthropomorphic association of seals as children of God. Similarly, SSCS writes that, after the hunt, “[c]old death [is] delivered to Christ” and that there will be “[c]rucifixes marked in blood” on the ice, thereby attributing an eternal soul to the seal and insinuating a metaphysical congruity between humans and animals.³⁶

The intrinsic value of the seal was discussed most prominently and explicitly by SSCS in March 2008, when an accident that killed four sealers occurred as their vessel was being towed by a Canadian Coast Guard ship off the coast of the Magdalen Islands. Following the accident, the SSCS released a statement noting that “[t]he Sea Shepherd Conservation Society [SSCS] recognises that the deaths of four sealers is [sic] a tragedy but Sea Shepherd also recognises that the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of seal pups is an even greater tragedy”. This statement led to the emergence of a sizeable public debate, prompting some media to accuse SSCS of erroneously equating the worth of a

³⁶ Interestingly, these are some of many uses of Christian symbolism proposed exclusively by SSCS, which include comparing the former DFO Minister Loyola Hearn to King Herod, both of whom are “killing babies”, thereby reaffirming the innocence of the seal and the evilness of the hunt. This use of religious elements in the defence of animal rights is most striking as it negates the literature on the matter, which widely holds that the Bible and, more generally, Judaeo-Christian thought provide a legitimisation for the human’s dominion over animals (see earlier discussion in section 2.2, as well as Nash, 1984; Singer, 1990).

seal to that of a human. SSCS later reiterated its original statement and further clarified its position on the human-seal similitude:

There are those who are appalled at any comparison between human lives and the lives of other animals. There are even a few ignorant people who deny that humans are also animals. There are those who feel that humans are divine, special, superior, or the only animals with emotions, souls, and capable of thought and reasoning. They are wrong.

Here, it is implied that seals are attributed characteristics that have historically been associated with humanity, including emotions, souls and the ability for reasoning. Furthermore, SSCS is structuring humanity as a subsidiary of animality, thereby countering the classifications of mainstream discourse (Stibbe, 2001, p. 157) and reasserting a biological similitude between seals and humans.

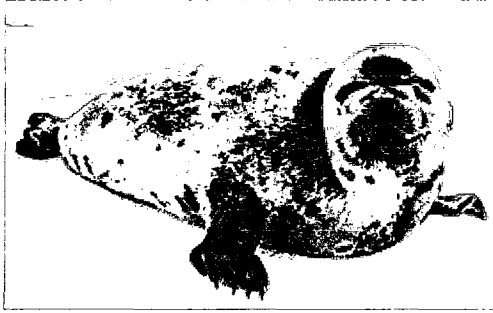
The second of the three anthropomorphic discourses deals with presenting the animal as part of a humanised narrative or, in other words, projecting typically human circumstances onto the seal. The first and most prevalent example of this type of anthropomorphism consists in creating narratives in which the seal is made to take on the role of a human infant. It has already been discussed that the seal's physiognomy possesses a significant level of cuteness by virtue of the similarities it shares with young humans. In addition to this, seals are attributed characteristics that create a parallel between their lives and those of infants. This trend was prevalent throughout the data studied, specifically in the textual documents, where the term "baby seal" was consistently used, often instead of the more scientifically accurate appellation of "pup seal".

The seals as infants narrative was also apparent, for instance, by referring to the ice banks where the seals are born and hunted as “seal nurseries” and by affixing a typically human family narrative onto seals, in which the “baby seals” are seen to have a relationship of dependency towards their mothers. The mother seal-pup seal relationship is a representational trend that is prevalent in both textual and visual documents. When they are killed, it is said that pup seals are pulled away from their mothers, leaving them behind “grieving”, “crying” and “wide-eyed” from the shock of seeing their “babies” killed. In the latter cases, two typically human physical manifestations of emotions (crying from sadness and opening eyes in shock) are attributed to the seal, thereby creating narratives which can be recognisable to humans and also capable of evoking pity. In the visual documents, several images portray the pup’s closeness to their mothers, such as depictions of pups nursing, thereby showcasing the closeness of the relationship all the while accurately representing the roles between mother and pup that exist in the wild. However, many other images rather illustrate typically human situations, such as a pup seal appearing to kiss an adult seal, thereby attributing to the seal a fully human narrative.

The tendency to attribute a human narrative to animals is further materialised visually by portraying the seals in other uniquely human situations. Most frequently, seals are depicted as portraying facial expressions that are typically associated with human responses to emotions.³⁷ The seal in Figure 6, for instance, appears to replicate the human smile by squinting. Others seem to be laughing by opening their mouths and are playfully

³⁷ The issue of the animal’s ability to feel emotions such as sadness and joy has been highly debated, both in biological and philosophical terms (Garner, 2005; Singer, 1990; and others). This, however, is immaterial to the present study, as we are rather concerned with the ways in which these feelings are attributed to the seal, and translated into textual and visual signs.

Figure 6: Seal Smiling (From SSCS)



waving at the camera. Conversely, other seals are seen to mimic human manifestations of dread and sorrow by looking blankly at the bloodied ice (Figure 12) or even by covering their face with their flipper. Certainly, these positions and facial expressions occur naturally in seals; however, they are not physiological, let alone, socio-cultural, reactions to joy, happiness, fear or sadness. They rather occur from happenstance and are interpreted by the human as relaying a recognisable indexical sign of the seal's relationship to a specific environment. The seal is seen reacting to its surroundings and manifesting human emotions, which it cannot communicate verbally, through facial expressions that are familiar to the human viewer. In the images studied, seals that appeared to be smiling, laughing or playfully waving at the camera (or more generally, that showed human reactions to positive emotions) are invariably photographed amidst a natural environment and in a setting that is undisrupted by hunters, blood or carcasses, or what Baker (2001) would call positive images. On the other hand, the seals that seem to exhibit human reactions to negative emotions are most often shown in situations of imminent danger and are usually depicted near hunters, blood or carcasses. In that sense, there exists a significant congruity between the environment and the expression of the seal. The enthymeme in this case is that the seal is happy when it lives undisturbed in its natural environment and that the seal is unhappy when it is in danger or has lost fellow seals. It is not the fact that the seal was captured on film in a peculiar position or situation that is the determinant rhetorical factor in this equation; it is rather the fact that this image was selected and used with the understanding

that the viewers would interpret signs through their breadth of empirically-known human emotions and experiences. The seal therefore is rendered a story-telling character in a commentary on its own environment.

The last of the three aspects of anthropomorphism is that which consists in likening the seal to a domesticated animal, and consequently diminishing its identity as a wild creature. As previously noted, urbanisation has lessened the extent of humans' encounters with wild species, and has rendered ownership of pets a preferred conduit for gaining knowledge of and interacting with the animal world (Serpell, 1996). Certain animals, specifically dogs and cats, have been integrated within the human realm in Western society to the extent that they are considered integral components of the family unit. Few people will ever see a seal in its natural habitat, let alone interact with it; therefore, understanding the behaviour of such a wild animal can rarely come from first hand experiences. Humans are then left to interpret mediated representations of the seal, whether they are visual or textual, through a humanised vision of animality that is shaped subjectively by behavioural patterns observed in pets and the kinship that has been established by living in proximity with tamed creatures. Several elements expressed in the visual and textual documents studied show animal rights activists reflecting on seals or interacting with them in ways that are akin to the relationship between a human and a domesticated animal.

Both visual and textual representations of the seal convey a unilateral perception of the seal as a species that is benevolent and towards which humans should feel affection and a sense of protection. Textually, expressions such as “harmless”, “gentle”, “playful”

Figure 7: Seal as Pet (from IFAW)



and “docile” are often used, and the seal’s wild character is seldom mentioned. Seals are frequently photographed in situations that mirror the contact that routinely occurs between pets and their human owners, which includes the human petting the seal’s coat, carrying it, and being photographed with it. In fact, in every instance where seals were photographed with activists from IFAW and SSCS, the human was

engaged in physical contact with the seal. Figure 7, for instance, illustrates a seal restfully lying on its back while a member of IFAW pets its stomach: a position that is strikingly reminiscent of contact between humans and dogs. In this case, the seal’s behaviour is similar to that of a pet: it is tame and it lets itself be petted, perhaps even appearing to enjoy the experience. In actuality, it is partly the seal’s actions that are in stark contrast with its wildness, but also its lack of signs directly indicating wildness: the seal is not seen biting or moving away from the human. It just seems immobile, docile, defenceless, and is in no way challenging the authority that the human is exerting over it. On the other hand, the humans’ attitudes towards the seal indicate a kinship that is indicative of a relationship with a pet. The human is not afraid of the animal or wary of its unpredictability, and interacts with it in the same way, using the very same actions as it

would with a dog of which he is the master. The seal becomes a hybridisation of the domestic and the wild: a docile creature in a hostile environment. The seal is still not a pet, but it *could* become one. It is seen as exhibiting the characteristics for an animal to become a loved family member: gentleness, docility and dependence upon a master for survival.

4.1.2.2 Reinforcement of animality. The three anthropomorphic strategies discussed above were completely absent from the data from DFO. Instead of constructing the seal's identity through a human prism, its animality and behavioural dissimilarity to humanity were emphasised. The disparity between the human and the seal can be observed in a discourse that highlights the wildness and animality of the seal, which has been found to be an overarching trend in the data that corresponds antithetically to the three anthropomorphising discourses discussed above.

It should first be noted that within the data studied, no reference is made to the seal's intrinsic worth in relation to that of the human, even in the documents pertaining to SSCS's Paul Watson's comments on the death of four sealers being less tragic than the death of seals, thereby hinting at a reluctance from DFO of delving into a debate on the metaphysical similarity of animals and humans and in presenting an anthropocentric position. The young seals, however, are always described as "pup seals", thereby avoiding the term "baby" and personal pronouns are never used in relation to the animals, thus not granting them personhood. Also, in contrast with the anti-CSH movement, DFO attributes a narrative to seals that is in many ways contrary to humanised discourse, instead emphasising behaviours that are most incongruous to those of humans. DFO, for instance, describes seals that are being killed as "self-reliant" and "independent", thus not

attributing to them a social dimension. Also, while a close mother seal-pup seal relationship was featured prominently throughout the anti-CSH movement's documents, DFO portrays a fundamentally different relationship that is purely biological and devoid of familial emotional attachments. For example, it is written that "three weeks after birth, females will abandon their pups", thereby using the term "female" instead of the more evocative and humanising term "mothers". Furthermore, the term "abandon" is used to illustrate not only a distance from the human mother-human infant relationship, but also to exemplify an attitude which human mothers can have towards their children that is condemned universally and considered unmotherly. DFO's representation of the mother seal-pup seal relationship is one that specifically highlights the short weaning period that is associated with most animals, but that is uncharacteristic of humans. The representation of a female abandoning her pup after three weeks becomes significantly different from the anti-CSH movement's representation of a mother seal who grieves for her dead baby.

Finally, instead of being attributed the domesticated temperament of docility or gentleness that is associated with seals by the anti-CSH movement, DFO tended to highlight the wildness of the seal, and emphasise its character as an untamed and potentially dangerous animal. None of DFO's images show the possibility of humans and seals interacting, as no photograph depicts both a live seal and a human. Similarly, one news release notes that:

While seals may appear to be 'cute and cuddly,' they are wild animals and should not be approached. Like all untamed animals, seals may respond aggressively by attacking if they are cornered or believe they

are being threatened, which could result in serious human injuries requiring medical attention.

While this news release is framed as a public notice, there is little doubt that it provides a starkly different representation of the seal's behaviour and interaction with humans than that portrayed by IFAW and SSCS. DFO here is highlighting the wildness of the seal by using the term "untamed", and is attributing to seals a violent behaviour by suggesting that they may attack humans. DFO also alludes to the non-threatening physical appearance of the seal being an indicator of docility; but writes that this association is misleading, thus reaffirming the seal's identity as a wild animal.

4.1.3 Singularity

I propose to now consider the singularity of the seal as it is expressed through the visual and textual documents of IFAW, SSCS and DFO. The animal rights movement tends to represent seals as unique and subjective beings, while DFO portrays them as devoid of individuality and subjectivity, thereby transferring their identity to that of the entire species. We will first consider Derrida's conception of *animalséance*³⁸ as a rhetorical trope, in the sense that it could act as a strategy or technique of persuasion that is both effective and replicable. On one hand, I will argue that impropriety can be crafted visually in order to instigate a fundamental questioning of the established norms of the human-animal relationship and thereby cast doubt onto the human's perception of the animal's metaphysical inferiority. On the other hand, I will consider that impropriety can be denied through images, or that propriety can be forced by making the individual seal a mere extension of a species, as a way of disallowing the questioning of the human-animal

³⁸ See sections 2.2 and 2.2.1.

relationship and thereby reasserting its metaphysical incongruity and the inferiority of animality.

The singularity of the seal is a theme that is prevalent throughout the textual and visual strategies of the anti-CSH groups. The SSCS, for instance, writes that in the same way that we imagine humans as possessing a singular set of characteristics, all “baby seals have different personalities”, and possess unique traits that differentiate them from the horde. The singularity of the seal, however, is most substantially and powerfully exhibited through images. Many photographs depicted a single seal in positive images. Furthermore, nearly all of these positive images depicted the seal firmly making direct eye contact with the viewer either from an intimate or personal distance (Hall, 1966, p. 116-119), thereby simulating the conditions propitious for a social rapport (Figure 8).³⁹ In fact, this proved to be most frequently-recurring category of photograph in the entire body of images studied from both IFAW and SSCS.

Figure 8: Seal Gazing (From IFAW)



I propose that the gaze of an animal is not only relevant philosophically, as it was for Derrida, who considered it an instigator for rethinking the metaphysical order of species, but that it can similarly exert rhetorical force and be used to endow the animal with an individuality. The gaze of an animal is bothersome, startling and profoundly improper. It ignites an *animalséance* that hints at an unsettling sameness between the species and can therefore shatter the human’s perception of the dyadic metaphysical disconnect between humanity and animality. The seal’s gaze, in fact, looks quite similar

³⁹ This was found to occur 47 times in 51 pictures.

to our own when communicating or looking, just to see; and suggests an underlying consciousness that is reminiscent of our own awareness of the world. The seal thereby escapes its status as an insignificant element of a foreign non-human species: its identity as a part of a species becomes amorphous, and easily trumped by the individuality that we award to it. Endowing the animal with subjectivity and uniqueness allows it to step away from the objectifying boundaries of the animal realm and the reciprocal gaze between human and seal herein becomes the first step towards a communication between humanity and animality.

Certainly, there is an important nuance between the *animalséance*, which arose between a cat and Derrida as they were in the same room, and the *animalséance* that can take place between a viewer and the object of the photograph. In using Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1971) study of presence, it can be concluded that a gaze simultaneously occurring between a live seal and a live human would yield a presence that cannot be rivalled by the photograph since the rhetorical effect is diminished as the presence of the rhetorical element is decreased. Images, however, can provide a somewhat mitigated, yet widely accessible trigger of *animalséance*, simulating a gaze that can transpire naturally. Furthermore, whereas the act of looking that occurs between the human and the animal has often been considered one-sided, and the animal's reciprocal stare is deemed fleeting and unsatisfying (Berger, 1981), photography provides an opportunity to immortalise the ephemeral instant. The individual seal is looking; literally, it *was* staring into the camera, but it *is* returning the viewer's gaze. In the Derridean sense, images are used to replicate conditions for impropriety and thereby

instigate a kinship between the seal and the human, by virtue of the gaze that is shared between the subject of the photograph and its viewer.

It was seen that the images of seals used by the anti-CSH movement maximised proximity and the seal's gaze was used as a means of fostering an impropriety within the viewer and endowing the seal with a unique identity. However, this trend is not reprised by DFO. In DFO's images, both the viewer and the animal are denied this interaction. In

Figure 9: Horde of Seals (from DFO)



the few instances where a seal is shown in proximity, it is always looking away from the camera (Figure 5). The viewer sees the animal, can look at it, but this gaze will never be returned in actuality, nor will it be returned in the viewer's imagination.

Even more tellingly, the visual representations of the seal by DFO strongly depict the seal as a numerical component of a horde. Of the ten images used by DFO to display seals, one of them shows a seal alone and seven of them consist of aerial views of hundreds or thousands of seals (Figure 9). By not depicting the seal alone, DFO is not only showing an ecologically abundant species, but is ultimately avoiding representing the seal as a unique creature. The seal instead is framed to be undistinguishable from its species and made to belong to a seemingly endless group of identical and interchangeable animals. In that sense, the aerial images used by DFO employ a public distance, which is “well outside of

the circle of involvement” (Hall, 1966, p. 123). The entirety of the seal’s body is seen from afar, to the extent that it is only minimally distinguishable. By photographing the seal from such a distance, the individual creature is denied the opportunity to engage the viewer with its gaze and propriety is therefore maintained. The viewers are not confronted with the troublesome gaze of an animal, and they do not endow it with a consciousness, uniqueness or subjectivity. No kinship, pity or sympathy can be formed and the seal remains just an animal that shares very little in common with humanity.

Let us consider this negation of impropriety in conjunction with Lippit’s (2000) concept of immortality of animals, and to show how this theory can be perceived as a rhetorical strategy. As explained in Chapter 2, when animals are not considered to be singular and subjective beings, each creature is replaceable and interchangeable within its species (Lippit, 2000, p. 172). The death of an individual animal is not only insignificant; it is in essence an inevitable function within an ecosystem. The meaninglessness of the animal’s death, however, requires us to consider it part of a horde, or a homogenous group of identical creatures. This interpretation of the animal’s interchangeability can be displayed in visual documents to exert a rhetorical force and ultimately diminish the subjectivity and individuality of the seal so that its identity is relinquished to its belonging to a group. In fact, without proper context, it would be even difficult to identify the animals photographed in Figure 9 as seals. Each seal is unaware that it is being seen, and is neither able nor inclined to reciprocate the gaze. Also, the number of seals is so large that each animal is merely an extension of the next. The individuality that may be embedded in one seal is trumped by the notion that many more identical creatures exist.

This notion can be found to correspond to Peirce's logical distinction of the type (legisign) and token (sinsign). The type relates to a sign that "does not exist; it only determines things that do exist" and the token is "[a] Single event which happens once and whose identity is limited to that one happening" (CP 4.537). In that sense, the herd of seals could be construed as a token (in that it is a single occurrence of a grouping of seals, which in itself consists of a certain number of tokens – each one of the seals of the herd), but it can also be found to relate to the idea of seals, and the broad conception or general notion of seals, as a type, and by extension as a symbol. While there are specific tokens in the image, none of them can be deemed unique, and all of them become mere replicas or manifestations of a type. Therefore, DFO's representation of the individual seal is one that sees it corresponding to an objectifying position of token of a type and an interchangeable example of the symbol of the seal, through which individuality is never presented and even carefully avoided. On the other hand, the anti-CSH movement allows the seal to be considered as a token that is individual and which has a specific value apart from its being just a specimen of this type from the all-encompassing type or idea of the seal. Each seal is different from the next, and each can similarly embody a type without thereby losing its uniqueness. The seals depicted by the anti-CSH movement are white, yellow, grey or black, they have unique patterns on their fur, their bodies vary in sizes and are positioned differently, they appear to be making specific facial expressions, thereby allowing virtually endless combinations or types of seals. As an example, we can consider a situation in which an individual's pet dog is killed. The owner would not consider that his dog can automatically be fully replaced simply by obtaining another dog of the same breed. The specific pet has in fact acquired a value outside of its existence as

a token of a breed. Each animal still stands for the species, but it is fully individual and discernable, and possesses a uniqueness that supersedes its existence as cloned token, and alters our understanding of the notion of the species, specifically the seal.

4.1.4 Utility

It has been previously discussed that the human's compassion towards a specific animal species is inversely correlated to its perceived utility or usefulness (Plous, 1993; Hills, 1993). Therefore, animals whose deaths yield utility will benefit from less sympathy and protection than those whose deaths are perceived to be useless. In that sense, both the anti-CSH movement and the Canadian government have been found to discuss the nature of the seal in relation to its utility. The overall utility of seals was presented on two levels: the utility of the seal alive and the utility of the seal dead. The anti-CSH movement overwhelmingly indicated that the seal was useful alive and useless dead, as a means of emphasising the triviality of the hunt and increasing compassion for the seal. Conversely, the Canadian government tended to portray seals as useless alive and useful dead, as a justification for the hunt and a way of decreasing empathy for the seal.

4.1.4.1 Alive. The utility of the seal alive, according to IFAW and SSCS, is chiefly attributed to an intrinsic value that all seals possess, which exists independently from any benefits that it can bring to the human or the ecosystem. The intrinsic value of the live seal was articulated within the concept of anthropomorphism, through which the seal's value is represented as comparable to that of the human.⁴⁰ On the other hand, DFO rather tended to portray the seal's life as useless, and focussed on its role as a nuisance

⁴⁰ See earlier discussion in section 4.1.2 on the seal's intrinsic value according to the anti-CSH movement.

both to human activity and the ecosystem.⁴¹ First, living seals are seen to take on some of the characteristics associated to pests, chiefly in the sense that they can be injurious to humans. It was seen earlier that DFO describes seals as being dangerous, therefore threatening human safety. DFO further attributes a deleterious behaviour to seals, writing that they have a nuisance-like impact on human activities. For instance, “[s]eals frequently swim up rivers to feed, eat the bait from traps, and cause significant damage to aquaculture and fishing gear”, thereby justifying their hunt. Interestingly, while using the depletion of the cod stocks as a legitimisation for the seal hunt had been a staple of the Canadian government’s rhetorical strategy for years (Busch, 1985, p. 253), this strategy was found to be absent from recent efforts, because of a lack of scientific support for this claim. Instead, DFO does mention generalities pertaining to the link between the seal’s consumption of fish stock, writing that seals “consume large amounts of fish”, but does little more than casually hint at a possible link between the seal’s consumption of fish and the depletion of fish stocks.

4.1.4.1 Dead. The anti-CSH movement and the Canadian government each put forth opposing perceptions of the seal’s usefulness as a commodity, with IFAW and SSCS arguing that the seal is used for objects of luxury and DFO arguing that the seal is used for essential products. In fact, DFO frequently refers to the seal as a “renewable resource”, and writes that they are killed for both human and animal consumption. Seals are also said to be hunted for “fuel, clothing, shelter and other products”, thereby indicating that the seal’s commodification addresses basic human needs. Seals are also

⁴¹ It would be inappropriate and perhaps disingenuous to suppose that DFO’s position is one that finds seals to be fundamentally useless alive. DFO does note, for instance, that the seal is a “part of a complex ecosystem”. Our interest, however, is seeing that DFO does not communicate rhetorically the importance of the live seal. It rather focuses on the hindrances brought on by the live seals and the benefits that are associated to their death, thereby justifying their role as objects acting as nuisances.

said to be significantly used to create capsules of Omega-3 acids, which “are known to be helpful in preventing and treating hypertension, diabetes, arthritis and many other health problems”. While the exploitation of seals for the fur and leather industry is mentioned, most references to the seal’s use relate to its essentiality for the survival of aboriginal people and the betterment of humans in general. Furthermore, the products derived from seals are described as “popular”, “useful” and “sought after by consumers”, thereby providing a justification for the seal’s death.

The anti-CSH movement, conversely, frames the seal’s death as pointless and the products that are derived from it as luxurious or useless. IFAW, for instance, writes that the hunt “produces a product nobody needs”, referring here most specifically to the fur industry. Both IFAW and SSCS describe the hunt as “wasteful”, noting that most of the animal is left unused and that many of the products that are derived from it are “unpopular” or “banned” in many foreign markets. SSCS additionally notes that seal products can potentially be harmful to humans, writing for example that the Omega-3 acid capsules contain “bioaccumulative PCBs [polychlorinated biphenyls]”, which are “carcinogens [...that] produce health affects [sic] such as skin ailments called chloracne, reproductive disorders, liver disease, and other problems”. By pointing to the uselessness and the deleterious effects of the by-products, the anti-CSH movement refutes DFO’s claim that the seal can yield useful commodities and rather underlines the futility of the seal’s death.

4.2 The Kill

It was established that the most prevalent portion of the discourse of the anti-CSH movement and the Canadian government tended to revolve on the articulation of the

meaning of the identity of the seal. However, the data also showed that attention was attributed to representing varying depictions of the CSH itself, and more specifically the operation of killing the seal. It was found that neither the anti-CSH movement nor the Canadian government depicted the actual death of the seal. This brings us to conclude that the very act that is being vehemently disputed and what may be construed as the essence of the CSH debate and the CSH itself is never pictured visually and seldom described textually. Rather, the anti-CSH movement consistently alludes to the kill as a horrific, irrevocable and unjustifiable act and depicts the moments preceding and following the hunt to present the horrors of the CSH. On the other hand, DFO portrays the kill visually as bloodless, limited and controlled. In their textual documents, DFO acknowledges that the kill is visually unpleasant, however, it finds the kill to be a sort of necessary evil in that it yields crucial economic and cultural benefits, thereby justifying the seal's death.

4.2.1 Anti-CSH Movement

The anti-CSH movement's representation of the hunt is one that finds the kill to be the final and most important element of the hunting practice. It is inescapably cruel and its repulsiveness cannot be justified by economic or cultural benefits that it may bring to humans, which are not acknowledged. Depictions of the actual death of the seal were completely absent from the anti-CSH movement's visual strategy, and textual depictions of the death were scarce. Instead, the anti-CSH movement tended to represent specific seal killing activities visually and textually, using two main strategies, each of which depicted chronological instances of the hunt. Therefore, the first strategy consists in portraying the moments before the kill and can be discussed in relation to Barthes'

concept of the *punctum*. It will be argued that there is a powerful rhetorical element embedded in the temporality of the image, most specifically in picturing the seal before it is killed. The second strategy lies in the depiction of the moments following the death of the seal, in that the killing yields shocking scenes, which frame the CSH as an activity that profoundly defies societal norms and humanist pieties.

4.2.1.1 *Before*. Much of the depiction of the hunt by the anti-CSH movement was centred on a very specific type of image: one that shows the seal before it is killed. I consider that this trend can be explained in relation to Barthes' second articulation of the *punctum*, which refers specifically to the way in which photography is inherently an expression of time whose subject became an element of the past the moment it was captured on film. The *punctum* thereby brings the viewer to the alarming and devastating realisation of mortality.⁴² I consider here that this articulation of the *punctum* can at once

Figure 10: Impending Death I (from IFAW)



be a shocking element inherent to the photograph and that it can similarly be purposefully constructed to exert a rhetorical power.⁴³ In Figure 10, a seal is pictured in the forefront, behind it is a sealing vessel from which hunters appear to be debarking. The ice bank is white, free from carcasses and blood, indicating that the hunt has not yet begun in this

location. The *studium* here, the general impression or cultured interest invested in the

⁴² See section 2.1.3 for a discussion on Barthes' notion of the *punctum*.

⁴³ See DeLuca (2006) for a discussion on the rhetorical force of the *punctum* (p.86).

image, is that of the young seal looking at the camera with a fishing vessel behind it. The *punctum* is our knowledge of its impending death. While the seal is pictured alive, we, the spectators, know it is already dead.

Of all of the images that depict sealers and seals interacting, none of them capture the true act of killing, or the specific moment when the hakapik makes contact with the seal's skull, or the instant when the animal is struck by the bullet. Are we to think that such an image would be too disturbing or gruesome, and that the anti-CSH movement is sparing the viewer from such a sight? This is doubtful as we will soon discuss that

Figure 11: Impending Death II (from SSCS)



distressing images containing blood and carcasses are abundantly used to ignite moral shock. Instead, several images published by IFAW and SSCS recurrently depict the same scene: a sealer holding his hakapik or club, clearly about to strike the seal (Figure 11).⁴⁴ I posit that depicting the seal that is about to die is, in a very specific way, more meaningful than showing it dead or dying. Mortality is still conveyed in the

⁴⁴ It is important to note that, as written in Chapter 1, firearms are much more widely used to conduct the CSH than are hakapiks. However, in the images studied, only a very small minority of the hunting situations portrayed firearms, and most of them focused on the use of the hakapik. One explanation of this phenomenon, as provided by the anti-CSH movement, is that the hunt near the Magdalen Islands, where the hakapik is predominantly used, is more accessible to observers than the hunt occurring near Newfoundland and Labrador. The hakapik, however, has become a powerful symbol in the anti-CSH rhetoric, as it uniquely allows the visually startling portrayal of both the seal and sealer interacting within a single photographic frame. The look that is seemingly shared between the hunter and the hunted in Figure 11, and the seal's apparent realisation of its own impending death would be impossible otherwise.

photograph; however it becomes the product of the thought of the viewers, and the onus is on them to push the boundaries of photography and reconstruct the death. A fixed photograph becomes animated, because we cannot help but continue the inevitable chain of events that has begun to unravel.

We see that the seal *was* not dead; its mouth is open as though to interject with the sealer's actions. Disturbingly, the sealer and the seal seem to be looking at each other. The sealer is covered in blood, an indexical sign of what he has already done and is about to do. But in every way the seal *is* dead. Only one likely outcome can be considered: the seal will momentarily be struck. In that sense, even if the death of the seal is not pictured, it is wholly the essence of the photograph. In the same way that Barthes (1981) shuddered "over a catastrophe which has already occurred" when confronted with the image of the prisoner about to be executed (p. 96), we are startled by the inescapability of the image. In a Barthesian way, then, *the seal is dead and it is going to die*. The *punctum* here, that semiotic element which pierces us, is not only the impending death of the seal, but its immediacy, and our realisation that we are privy to the seal's last moment of life.

4.2.1.2 *After*. The second articulation of the hunt by the anti-CSH movement was found to consist of gruesome and shocking images taken after the seal's death, showing carcasses, dead seals and bloody ice banks. As discussed by Jasper and Poulsen (1995), shocking images and texts are frequently used by the animal rights movement, and are specifically efficient at garnering public support. The authors put forth the theory of powerful condensing symbols, which are used by activist movements as instigators of moral shocks and public outrage (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995, p. 495-498). Condensing symbols can be articulated visually or verbally and present cultural meanings that are

strongly at odds with society's norms. The use of condensing symbols and consequently moral shocks was found to be an important representational aspect of the campaigns against the CSH by IFAW and SSCS, and represented a crucial element of their portrayal of the hunt. Many images and textual elements were meant to illustrate a shocking portrayal of hunting activities, which would clash with society's accepted values.

The textual depictions of the hunt tended to be highly descriptive and especially imagistic. For instance, SSCS describes the hunt in the following way:

[The CSH is an] annual ritual of death where grown men kick seal pups in the face, bash in their skulls, skin them alive and stain the ice floes red with the blood of hundreds of thousands of seal pups, turning the nursery floes of these gentle creatures into a living hell of spewing blood and gore amidst the pitiful screams of dying and injured young animals.

Here, the textual representation of the hunt portrays it to be needlessly cruel to animals and therefore morally reprehensible. Expressions such as "grown men kick seal pups in the face" and "skin them alive" denote an obvious and cruel abuse of strength at the expense of a less powerful being. Also, while this specific excerpt relayed the concrete act of killing the seal ("bash in their skulls"), much of the focus of textual depictions of the hunt revolved on a visual or multisensory rendering of the post-kill environment, which is made to resemble a disturbing carnage.

Similarly, many images tended to show the seals after they had been killed, usually depicting several carcasses on bloodied ice banks (Figure 12). The photographs are made all the more visually striking by the contrast of the red blood on the white ice. The scene is chaotic and disconcerting: the ice is covered in blood and skinless carcasses

seem to be wastefully left behind. In Peircean terms, the photograph itself functions as an indexical sign, which would not exist if its object did not as well. The mere existence of the indexical sign proves the existence of the object (Hill, 2004 p. 29) and is awarded a verisimilitude that cannot be rivalled by textuality. The existence of a brutal and bloody hunting photograph proves the existence of a brutal and bloody hunt. These images are morally upsetting to a society where meat is purchased pre-packaged and where animals are killed in slaughterhouses far away from consumers' eyes and consciousness.

Figure 12: Seal Carcasses (from IFAW)



The idea that the visual depiction of an animal suffering (or having suffered) is a shocking condensing symbol can also be seen to be part of Baker's (2001) explanation of documentary images. They are said to consist of brutal and unpleasant images of animal abuse which possess a persuasive strength outside of their indexical relationship with reality. The documentary image's force is associated to the understanding that this singular picture depicts one, amidst a host of instances of animal killings (p. 221). In that sense, its power extends beyond the confinement of the photograph, in terms of both space and time. The image of the bloodied seal carcasses reveals a scene that the viewer knows to be recurring over a period of days and years. Likewise, this specific bloodied

ice bank is one of many others that have not been captured on film, thereby hinting at a mass carnage that cannot be fully captured visually.

4.2.2 Canadian Government

The anti-CSH movement's representation of the kill finds the death of the seal to be an event that is embedded with a finality and a cruelty that cannot be justified by benefits to humans. Conversely, DFO finds the kill to be transcended and ultimately justified by its economic and cultural impact. The kill is rendered insignificant and becomes a necessary step in the pursuit of human benefits. Furthermore, DFO overwhelmingly represents the kill textually through a rationalisation and its only visual representation shows a seal that has been killed almost bloodlessly.

Killing a seal is an inescapably bloody activity, specifically considering recent regulatory changes, which now require the "severing of the two axillary arteries of the seal located beneath its front flippers" as a way of bleeding out the animal and ensuring clinical death before the skinning. As discussed earlier, the representation of a bloody kill is at odds with society's norms and greatly differs with the accepted commodification of animals that is typically unseen because of modern slaughterhouses and farms. Therefore, a positive framing of the hunt can hardly include its accurate visual rendering. This absence of the visual depiction of death is telling, and reflects the taboo of the kill within the DFO discourse. While death is implied, it is never fully shown. The bloody kill is an element that is wholly absent from the pro-CSH discourse since an accurate depiction of the seal's death is inescapably abhorrent. DFO's visual representation of the death of the seal was in fact only minimal, as it used a single image of seals in a hunting context. This photograph consisted of two dead seals whose skulls are being palpated by a DFO

Fishery Conservation Officer (Figure 13). In contrast to the images of the anti-CSH movement, which are indicative of a chaotic and bloody death, the seals seem to have been killed cleanly and almost bloodlessly. The presence of the Fishery Conservation

Figure 13: Dead Seals (from DFO)



Officer is suggestive of stringent monitoring and the enforcement of the humanness of the kill.

Furthermore, the killing seems to have been conducted more carefully, and in a manner that is less widespread than the mass carnage repeatedly portrayed by the anti-CSH movement. In essence, the death pictured by

DFO is akin to the socially acceptable norms of how an animal should be killed: humanely, limitedly and as cleanly as possible. While the image of the dead seals provides a muted and socially acceptable rendering of death, DFO does textually acknowledge the bloodiness of the hunt, writing that:

[t]he killing of any animals, whether they are domesticated or wild, is never pleasant to watch. However, this society makes use of many different animals for food and clothing. In this sense, the harvesting of seals is not fundamentally different from the exploitation of livestock.

The brutality of killing the seal is not discussed or depicted, but it is rather insinuated.

The violence of the hunt is even seen to be mitigated textually through the frequent use of the term “seal harvesting”, which is often used instead “sealing”, “killing” and “hunting”.

The term “harvest” was originally used in the context of agriculture and, more recently, in relation to aquaculture and its production of fish and shellfish under controlled

conditions, specifically cultivated for human consumption. The term denotes a process of gathering crops and a methodical cultivation of food, as well as non-violent means of obtaining provisions, where the crop is seen as a passive object and the hunter becomes more akin to a cultivator.

For DFO, sealing is seen as a means to an end, and benefits that are seen to act as a justification for killing seals are attributed to the CSH. Throughout the textual documents produced by DFO, the kill is repeatedly justified as an activity that yields useful products⁴⁵ and that is economically crucial, most specifically to the thousands of sealers for whom sealing is said to represent as much as 35% of the annual income. Furthermore, the CSH is said to be vital to the sealing communities, which process seals and whose economies depend on the existence of the industry. Overall, the CSH is repeatedly attributed terms such as “viable”, “financially important”, “economically crucial” and “important revenue” to justify and highlight the necessity of the hunt.

DFO also construes the killing as an act that is intrinsically valuable, outside of any financial benefits that it may bring. Sealing is seen as an end in itself, by virtue of being an expression of culture and identity for both coastal citizens and aboriginal peoples. Sealing is described as a “long-standing tradition”, a part of a “cultural heritage” and “Canadian culture” and is explained to be a way to “express a sense of cultural pride and identity”. Killing the seal is therefore construed as an inherently important act that connects sealers with their ancestors, communities and country. Additionally, the act is deemed to be a way to “demonstrate individual hunting skills” in a group setting, thereby attributing to it a socialisation role. Lastly, killing a seal is deemed crucial to the acculturation of certain aboriginal peoples, through its use in “ceremonial” acts. For

⁴⁵ See discussion on the utility of the dead seal in section 4.1.4.1.

instance, seals are said to be used in an important rite of passage for the Inuit, with its killing providing a symbolic bridge into adulthood for young males. Therefore, DFO presents the kill as an act that can transcend its inherent brutality because it yields important economic benefits and is found to be embedded with a unique cultural value.

It can be concluded that the portrayal of the kill by both the anti-CSH movement and the Canadian government entails a fundamentally pragmatistic approach to representing the CSH. Pragmatism is founded on the notion that the general, conceivable consequences of a concept are essentially its true meaning.⁴⁶ In that sense, by depicting what is entailed by the CSH, its true purport is presented. On one hand, the anti-CSH movement illustrates the corollary of the hunt as a devastating and bloody carnage, and these elements are presented as embodying the true sense of the CSH. Similarly, DFO discusses the consequence of the hunt, specifically its cultural and economic benefits, as being the meaning of the CSH. In both instances, then, the consequences of the hunt are depicted, and are presented as accurately encompassing its meaning.

4.3 *The Sealers*

The representation of the sealers also proved to be an important component in the rhetoric of the CSH. The anti-CSH movement's representation of the sealer tended to be highly heterogeneous, with IFAW and SSCS portraying very different representations of the sealers, specifically through their textual documents. While SSCS abundantly represented the hunters in a negative light, this was not the case for IFAW, which only

⁴⁶ The pragmatistic maxim states: “[c]onsider what effects that might *conceivably* have practical bearings you *conceive* the objects of your *conception* to have. Then, your *conception* of those effects is the whole of your *conception* of the object.” (CP 5.438)

paid minimal attention to them. SSCS presented the sealers as possessing a sadistic nature and as displaying a primitivism that is curiously akin to animality, while IFAW generally did not place the blame on them for conducting the CSH. On the other hand, DFO emphasised the humanity of sealers and attributed to them positive traits which relate to their traditional way of life. Furthermore, it was found that, in the cases of SSCS and DFO, the identity of the sealers was meshed with that of coastal communities, and, more specifically, that the traits associated to the sealers—whether positive or negative—tended to be also generalised to their community.

4.3.1 Sealers According to the Anti-CSH Movement

The SSCS articulated textually and visually two different, yet complementary, conceptions of sealers. First, sealers were most prominently portrayed to be sadistic beings who found pleasure in killing seals. In fact, SSCS mostly uses the term “baby killer” to refer to a sealer. Other terms, such as “serial killer”, “sadistic men”, “thugs” and more imagistic expressions like “blood-stained men with hearts as hard and merciless as iron” and “scum that rape the oceans” are used in nearly every textual document. Here, SSCS reprises terms associated with individuals who are held in the lowest regard in society (killers and rapists, for instance) and attributes them to sealers, consequently equating the CSH with the perpetration of an immoral act and sealers to immoral individuals. SSCS thereby creates a melodramatic narrative and a discourse in which villains (sealers) and victims (seals, which have already been described as defenceless) are made to interact.

The second representation of the sealer is one of a primitive being who is physically strong but mentally inept. Terms such as “monstrous”, “goons”, “moronic”,

“ignorant” and “uneducated” were frequently used. The humanity of the sealer is also put into question, and they are made to belong to a category that is akin to, but falls outside of it. Sealers are called “Neanderthals” and, even more often, are specifically likened to animals. For instance, one sealer is dubbed a “cigarette smoking ape with a club”, thereby associating his actions with animality. The analogy of sealers to animals is reprised differently throughout the SSCS textual documents, but remains a consistent element. In one account, Paul Watson, the leader of SSCS, recalls an encounter with 300 sealers from the Magdalen Islands, who attacked him in his hotel room:

I could hear the *low nasal snarl of the local French patois punctuated with bastardized English obscenities* in the hallway as they searched for my room. I could smell the cheap stale tobacco, the rank body odour and spilt beer as the stench of the mob seeped under the door moments before they smashed it in with an axe and stormed in like a bunch of deranged goons.
(emphasis added)

The sealers’ communication becomes more akin to animal sounds than to reasoned human language. The communication is made to be akin to the archaic linguistic tradition of orality and illiteracy, as exemplified in the derogatory term *patois*. The term is furthermore associated with an unrecognisable and inferior perversion of the European French. Watson does not describe a situation in which words or thoughts are being expressed by men, but rather one in which meaningless and incomprehensible noises are emanating from a homogeneous mob of a foreign species. We are reminded here of Aristotle’s distinction between humans and animals as one that is based on the former’s unique ability for speech and the latter’s use of noises to express pleasure and pain. Sealers are rendered in a state that has little in common with humanity and are made to embody animals or the inferior *other*.

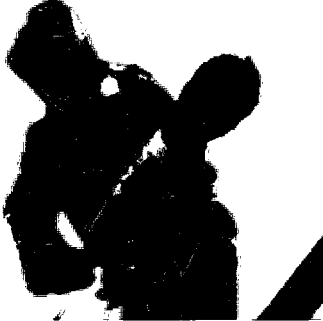
Comparing sealers to apes or to a pack of nondescript animals could possibly be interpreted in evolutionary terms—in the sense of likening a human to a more archaic version of this same human. However, it is unavoidable to consider the peculiar contradiction that is inherent to this comparison. The human becomes an ape, which is assumed to be inferior, wild, violent and murderous. Comparing humans committing evil deeds to animals has broadly been associated to the objectification of animality and has been deemed detrimental to the ideals of the animal rights movement (Baker, 2001, p. 89). Meanwhile, as we previously discussed, seals are anthropomorphised and elevated to the level of humanity⁴⁷ and are therefore seen here to become morally superior to their hunters. The incongruity between humanity and animality does not change; the characteristics that render humans a superior species remain intact. However, the humanity here is taken away from the sealer and is reassigned to the seal, while the animality biologically inherent to the seal is affixed to the sealer.

IFAW, conversely, rarely discussed sealers and largely refrained from attributing to them a violent and sadistic behaviour. In fact, in the sample of data studied, there existed only one attribution of negative characteristics to sealers, which shows a clear incongruity with the strategy of SSCS. In the instances when sealers were discussed, it was rather insinuated that they were not specifically cruel individuals, but were rather forced into sealing because of the Canadian government's incompetence and mismanagement. IFAW writes, for instance, that “[i]f Canadian politicians really cared about sealers and their families, they would put their money where their mouth is and start transitioning people out of this archaic and unnecessary industry”, thereby pointing

⁴⁷ See earlier discussion on anthropomorphism, specifically in section 4.1.1.

to the government as the true culprit of the hunt and to the sealers as victims of financial hardship.

Figure 14: Aggressive Sealer (from SSCS)



The negative representation of the sealers described textually by SSCS tended to be also disseminated visually by both IFAW and SSCS. All of the sealers portrayed in photographs by IFAW and the SSCS were predictably involved in sealing activities and were often seen in the process of killing seals (Figure 11). These images thereby depict sealers exhibiting violence and conducting what is deemed to be an immoral act. In accordance with their textual approach to articulating a representation of sealers, SSCS depicted them visually more often than did IFAW. Furthermore, SSCS's images of sealers showed them in situations indicating a more broadly aggressive demeanour that was directed at both seals and humans (Figure 14). When sealers are portrayed visually, they are depicted in confrontational situations, often wielding their weapons and perpetrating violent acts, thereby showcasing an aggressive nature that transcends their sealing activities and that more generally points to a violent behaviour (Figure 14).

4.3.2 Sealers According to DFO

The representation of the sealer by DFO expectedly differs quite drastically from that which is proposed by the anti-CSH movement, specifically by SSCS. Sealers were attributed a personhood that was not present in the anti-CSH rhetoric. Sealers were placed within a human narrative as a way of reaffirming their humanity and their typicality. Also, while sealers were portrayed as primitive by SSCS, they were rather shown to be traditional by DFO and were attributed positive and virtuous personality traits that fit

within a framework of traditionality and rurality. Additionally, contrary to the anti-CSH movement, which tended to abundantly picture sealers, DFO did not provide visual renderings of the sealers conducting the hunt.⁴⁸

The representation of sealers was chiefly articulated through verbal testimonials that were included in written form in a section of the web site that was added for the 2009 hunt. The testimonials, which were comprised of sealers' reflections pertaining to the importance of the CSH to their lives, served chiefly as a way of personalising the sealers, and awarding them a human identity. They were found to highlight a very different understanding of the sealers' communication than that proposed by SSCS. Instead of being attributed a communication style that is akin to the animal voice (the "low nasal snarl of the local French patois punctuated with bastardized English obscenities"), sealers are awarded instead the ability for intelligible and reasoned speech, and their humanity and subjectivity are thereby reaffirmed. One sealer writes:

Well, the reason why I got into the seal hunt, because it is part of our culture and heritage around Newfoundland to be a sealer and my grandfather used to, [sic] was a sealer and my father was a sealer and I'm also a sealer and I have four other brothers that [sic] go sealing with me.

In addition to being granted speech, this sealer is also humanised through the attribution of a social and specifically familial lifestyle. The sealer is seen as acting out a tradition

⁴⁸ There was perhaps one exception to this, where part of the bottom half of a sealer was pictured in the background of an image (Figure 13). However, the photograph most clearly features a Fishery Conservation Officer pictured in the foreground, and was not deemed to be a purposeful or specifically meaningful visual rendering of a sealer. Furthermore, DFO did not portray the sealers visually conducting sealing activities. It should be noted in passing that there were visual depictions of sealers in the filmed versions of the testimonials, where sealers were seen outside of a sealing context (they were in a village, in ordinary clothing), thereby reinforcing their humanity and typicality.

that transcends mere economic benefits and that has acted as a socialising element inherent to the makeup of coastal communities. Additionally, DFO often refers to sealers as “family members”, “friends” and “coastal citizens”, all of which are terms that emphasise their adherence to a human community. Similarly, the humanity of sealers is also articulated through the use of other terms, such as “individuals” and “people”, which were prevalent in the DFO textual documents, and strikingly absent from the documents from SSCS.

While the sealers were construed as archaic and primitive by SSCS, they are rather shown to be upholding a cultural heritage and living simple and traditional lives in remote rural communities. One sealer writes that “we are just ordinary folks who try to make a living from the sea”, thereby indicating the typicality and relatability of sealers, as well as their attachment to a rural lifestyle. DFO also attributes sealers virtuous character traits that are reminiscent of traditionality, often describing them as “hard-working”, “dedicated”, and earning an “honest living”. They are also said to possess integrity and to be friendly by showing hospitality towards visitors and tourists. Furthermore, the sealers are depicted as a few remaining embodiments of traditional Canadian coastal life, and as some of the last individuals “who try to make a living from the sea”. In that sense, they are being represented a sort of endangered species: a group whose livelihood should be preserved in a way which is akin to protecting the last living speakers of a vanishing language or the last remaining creatures of a disappearing species.

4.3.3 Projecting the Sealers' Identity onto Communities

It was found that in the cases of SSCS and DFO, which both thoroughly narrated an identity of the sealers, that this representation was meshed with that of coastal

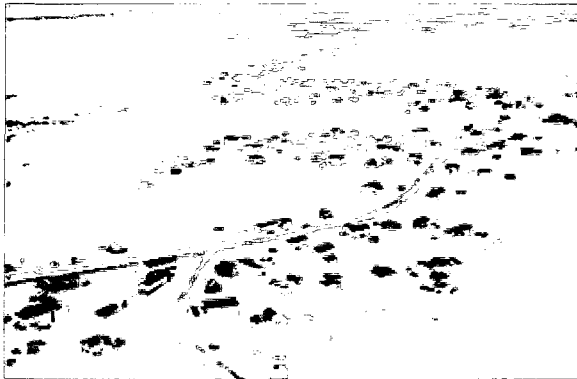
communities. In other words, the traits associated with the sealers—whether positive or negative—tended to be also generalised to their community. In that sense, the communities touched by the hunt, specifically the fishing and sealing villages in Newfoundland and Labrador and the Magdalen Islands, were attributed negative characteristics by SSCS and positive characteristics by DFO.

SSCS's negative representation of sealing communities was observed mostly in relation to the Magdalen Islands, which was dubbed "sealbilly land" (a portmanteau word made from seal and hillbilly), and "Magandertal" (from Magdalen and Neanderthal), thereby reprising the themes of primitivism and animality that had been associated with sealers and projecting them to the community. Furthermore, the aggressive behaviour that had been linked visually and textually to sealers is also generalised to the community by writing, for instance, that residents of the Magdalen Islands routinely beat their children and writing that:

I understand that next to sealing, that wife beating is the other big recreational activity on the islands closely followed by beer drinking, barroom brawling, tobacco rolling and listening to Celine Dion. (From SSCS)

By likening "wife beating" and "barroom brawling" to recreational activities, SSCS maintains the representation of sealers as finding a sadistic pleasure in violence, and also generalises this characteristic to the totality of the Magdalen Islands. Overall, it was seen that SSCS purports a discourse that is akin to racism, and its representation of sealers and their communities is one that finds them to irrevocably belong to a race that is intrinsically sadistic and primitive. According to Taguieff (1988), hinting at a difference

Figure 15: Sealing Village (from DFO)



that is inherent and culturally-specific to a people is essentially linked to its hierarchisation, and is indiscernible from racism. Residents of the Magdalen Islands, specifically, are herein made to embody an incomprehensible and fundamentally evil *Other*, that is both wholly inferior and

disparate from humanity. In that sense, the sealers and their communities are attributed characteristics that undermine their morality and intelligence, and status as human beings. The sealers are presented as being merely symptoms of broader societal customs of a community that is at once primitive and that tolerates violence and abuse. The seals, therefore, are victims of aggression by an especially brutal and inferior people, and the seal hunt is considered an expression of this culturally-defined sadistic violence.

While communities are presented as archaic and primitive by the SSCS, DFO rather emphasises their traditionality, rurality and quaintness, thereby also projecting the identity of the sealers onto their communities. Inhabitants of sealing communities are also said to be “friendly” and “welcoming”, as were the sealers. DFO also writes that the existence of these communities is effectively connected to the existence of the sealing industry, as they would be destroyed by a rural exodus if the CSH were to cease. Also, while it was seen earlier that sealers tended to not be portrayed visually, DFO instead depicted sealing villages (Figure 15). Photographs of small sealing villages were presented as a means of highlighting their remoteness, distance from modernity and

connection to the ocean, and as a way of displaying the existence of a simple and traditional community life.

4.4 The Self and the Adversary

The data also showed that, in concordance with the literature on the matter of polemics between social movements and countermovements, both the anti-CSH movement and the Canadian government presented pejorative representations of the other, or the adversary. It was also found, however, that both the anti-CSH movement and the Canadian government, to a large extent, represented themselves using similar patterns, thereby countering the negative characteristics that had been attributed to them by the adversary and redefining their identities publicly. The analysis of the description of the self by IFAW and SSCS was found to be very similar to the representation of the self by the Canadian government. While certain key differences remained, both chiefly described themselves as defending a less powerful being. Similarly, the representation of the adversary by IFAW and SSCS, and DFO was largely congruous, all of which were accusing the other of using falsehoods to manipulate public opinion, of using their position on the CSH for political or financial gains, and of acting as an aggressor to a less powerful being. Also, both the anti-CSH movement and DFO portrayed themselves visually, but avoided lending a visual representation to the adversary.

4.4.1 Representation of the Anti-CSH Movement

4.4.1.1 By the self. The anti-CSH movement mainly represents itself as a protector, defender and guardian of seals. This is exemplified through the use of terms like “defenders”, “heroes” and “Shepherd” (specifically by SSCS, in relation to the seals being compared to lambs). The anti-CSH movement also portrays itself as physically

weak and good, (which is in stark contrast with the sealer's representation of strong and evil) by using terms such as “weak”, “a bunch of vegetarians”, “kind and gentle”, “dedicated”, “courageous” and “volunteers”. The anti-CSH movement is also widely represented visually, through the depiction of activists cheerfully interacting with one another and with seals.

4.4.1.2 By the adversary. DFO's representation of the anti-CSH movement found it to resort to falsehoods and appeals to emotions in order to gain public support on the matter of the CSH. DFO accuses the anti-CSH movement of spreading “emotional rhetoric”, “baseless allegations” and “misinformation”, as a means of manipulating public opinion. DFO also commonly accuses the anti-CSH movement of falsely stating that whitecoat seals are hunted, and of using their photos to manipulate public opinion.⁴⁹ DFO also presented the anti-CSH movement as using the seal hunt polemic as a means for financial gain. This included the frequent use of the adjective “professional” to describe protesters, writing that they “earn a living by protesting the seal hunt” and that they are “money-sucking manipulators”. These expressions suggest that the opposition to the CSH is a mere ploy to obtain financial gain, and that its ideological position is one of convenience. Lastly, DFO criminalises the anti-CSH movement and uses the term “extremists” broadly to describe the protestors. For instance, DFO writes that:

⁴⁹ While it is not the purpose of this study to sort between fact and fiction within the CSH discourse, it is relevant to address this claim, since it deals directly with rhetoric. It was in fact found that whitecoats were abundantly used in visual renderings of seals, but there was only one instance of a visual depiction of a whitecoat being killed. This image was clearly dated, but nonetheless provided a visual rendering of a hunt that is now illegal. It was, however, put within a historical context of the organisation's fight against the hunt of whitecoats in the 1980s. It was also found that the anti-CSH movement never claimed that whitecoats are being legally hunted, but did predominantly use the term “baby seal”, a term that they use for the slightly older beater seals, but that may be ambiguously construed as whitecoats.

Mr. Watson's organization [SSCS] has been known to cause physical harm and damage to property. Their flagship vessel, the Farley Mowat, proudly bears the names of fishing vessels it claims to have sunk.

In that sense, DFO is attributing a violent and criminal behaviour to the anti-CSH movement and is accusing them of using disproportionate tactics to achieve their goals.

4.4.2 Representation of DFO

4.4.2.1 *By the self.* DFO chiefly represented itself by defining its role as a protector in its relationship with sealers. DFO uses terms such as “stand up for”, “protect”, “committed to” so as to define its rapport with sealers as one in which a more powerful being defends a weaker one. DFO also writes that:

The Government of Canada will continue to speak up in support of the hunt and in defence of *our sealers* who carry out a legal, humane, and sustainable hunt that has been part of our culture for centuries. (emphasis added)

The government frequently referred to sealers using a possessive pronoun (i.e. “our sealers”), which is seen to emphasise the sealers’ sense of belonging with regards to DFO, and the latter’s pride and attachment towards the sealers. This representation of sealers as belonging to the government, or rather as falling under its protection, was seen recurrently throughout DFO’s textual documents. DFO also tended to provide visual representations of itself by frequently displaying DFO Fishery and Conservation Officers in uniforms. They were depicted in sealing situations, where seals or hakapiks, for instance, were being inspected for concordance with regulation (Figure 13). This provided DFO with an image of responsibly enforcing a legal and humane hunt.

4.4.1.2 By the adversary. The anti-CSH movement's depiction of the Canadian government was one that tended to pejoratively describe a variety of figures within the Canadian political system, including the party in power (the Conservative Party of Canada), the other major federal political parties, DFO, the Minister of DFO (specifically former Minister Loyola Hearn), and, to a lesser extent, DFO scientists and the Canadian Coast Guard. Most attacks, however, were directed specifically at DFO, and were centred on the theme of manipulating facts and using rhetorical ploys to gain public support, and terms such as "spin", "manipulation" "baseless rhetoric", "emotional campaign of rhetoric", and "misinformation" were frequently used. Furthermore, the Canadian government was accused of using the hunt for financial and political gains, noting, for instance, that the support of the seal hunt is attributable to a "political competition for a few seats in Atlantic Canada". IFAW also adds that:

[... T]he only folks who really make a decent living supporting the seal hunt are politicians from Atlantic Canada. That's why East coast ministers, MPs [members of Parliament] and senators from all four political parties in Parliament are far more fanatical about killing seals than are most sealers themselves.

The attacks of resorting to demagogy and of making illegitimate profits essentially follow patterns of the polemical discourse of modern politics, and are highly typical of criticisms of the government by the opposition in democratic regimes. However, the anti-CSH movement also accuses the government of exerting cruelty in the hunt, and of gaining pleasure from the death of the seals. It was found that this claim, while often generalised to DFO as a whole, was especially attributed to former Minister Loyola Hearn by SSCS.

Words used to describe the Minister included chiefly those that alluded to his responsibility in the deaths of the seals, including “angel of death”, “Newfie butcher” and “mass murdering monster”. His leadership was compared to that of violent totalitarian regimes, by using the terms “fuehrer”, “fish czar”, “right wing fanatic” and “dictator”. Other derogative terms, alluding to Hearn’s unsuitability to the role of Minister were used, which included “goofy”, “clown” “ridiculous” and “redneck”. These terms, among others, were also used to present the Minister as incompetent, unintelligent and impulsive.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

5.1 Overview of Rhetorical Approaches

The specific uses of textuality and visuality by IFAW, SSCS and DFO were discussed throughout the explanation of the rhetorical processes used in representing the seal, the kill, the sealers, and the adversary and the self. It is relevant, in order to fully address the research questions, to specifically explain the concurrent use of textual and visual documents within each position, and its relation to rhetoric.

5.1.1 Rhetoric of the Anti-CSH Movement

The textual and visual documents were found to be comprised of similar and coherent trends within the anti-CSH movement, in the sense that each conveyed complementary, congruous and non-contradictory renderings of the CSH.⁵⁰ The anti-CSH movement tended to chiefly articulate a rhetorical strategy that was based on the use of *pathos*, while *logos* and *ethos* were used to a much lesser degree. This was especially true of the SSCS, which relied overwhelmingly and almost exclusively on melodramatic and emotional appeals to engage the empathy of the audience. IFAW, while still predominantly using *pathos*, included significant reasonable appeals in the textual documents by extensively quoting veterinary reports and providing some economic data on the CSH.

The anti-CSH movement extensively used visual documents to disseminate its position on the CSH. The visual documents used by IFAW and SSCS were indicative of a

⁵⁰ The only discrepancy found between the textual and visual documents of a single organisation was outlined in section 4.3.1, and was IFAW's representation of the sealers. IFAW's textual depictions of sealers were found to be mostly conciliatory, while their visual representations were unmistakably accusatory.

high consistency in visual strategies within the anti-CSH movement, and tended to represent a highly homogeneous view of the CSH, with many images being full contextual replicas of each other. The anti-CSH movement's predilection towards articulating arguments visually can be found to correspond to its use of emotional appeals. Visual arguments have been described as being especially efficient in appealing emotion (Hill, 2004, p. 28-32) and were frequently used in the anti-CSH rhetoric as a means of instigating sympathy for seals and protesters, and of showing the shocking nature of the kill and sealers.

As Blair (2004) notes, while recounting the sculptural depictions of hell and heaven typically found in European medieval cathedrals, certain rhetorical enthymemes are more potent when depicted visually. The carvings of the pain-stricken and contorted faces of hell-bound sinners could not be as efficiently communicated textually as they are visually. Blair (2004) writes that “[n]o words can convey the horrible fate of the damned or the ecstatic beatitude of the saved as dramatically, forcefully and realistically as do the stone carvings” (p. 53). In that sense, it is understood that certain situations specifically lend themselves to visual rhetoric. It seems apparent that the conveyance of pain is one of them. The most thorough or evocative textual depiction of the seal's suffering could not match the vivacity and immediacy of its visual representation. In that sense, the emotion brought on by images of bloodied carcasses on the ice or, more poignantly—or *presently*, as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1971) would argue—a video of a seal fidgeting as it is being sliced open could not be fully replicated by a textual equivalent. Likewise, any textual, albeit sound explanation provided by DFO for the images (the argument here is

that the hunt is humane, that the seals are killed painlessly, and that swimming reflexes remain active after its clinical death) cannot counter the force of the visual.

There is an additional point that should be made in relation to textuality and visuality regarding the anti-CSH movement, which deals specifically with the peculiar incongruity found in representing the cuteness of the seal visually, but not textually.⁵¹ While *pathos* permeated through the entire strategy, there was a tendency to implicitly adopt a rational approach so as to justify the anti-CSH position, which was especially manifested in the textual depiction of seals. Certainly, depicting the cuteness of the animals can be perceived as an appeal to emotion, but, in a specific sense, it can also be congruent with a seemingly logical approach to the CSH. The cuteness is not fully fabricated by the anti-CSH movement, as it can be considered biologically inherent to pup seals. The viewers are left to interpret the physical makeup of the seal and the cuteness identifiers embedded in the image, without being textually guided or prompted by the anti-CSH movement. The anti-CSH movement's reliance on cute animals can perhaps be even rationally justifiable, as they are (in the case of the beaters) the animals targeted by the hunt. This, however, does not make the photographs any less of a purposeful construction of the seal as a cute animal; it just *appears* to be its natural, logical and non-fabricated depiction. Quite conversely, it was previously seen that the seal's physiognomy could easily have been disseminated differently, using a virtual absence of cuteness identifiers, as it was the case in DFO's depiction of older dark harps (Figure 5).

While the visual depiction of cuteness is apparent, it was found that the anti-CSH movement does not represent the seal textually as "cute" or "adorable", and tends to

⁵¹ See earlier analysis of data in section 4.1.1.

avoid relaying linguistically the identifiers that relate to the seal's physiognomic cuteness. The lack of textual articulations of cuteness, are then, in a specific way, presenting the anti-CSH movement's position towards seals as fully reasonable, and not one that is simplistically and perhaps irrationally predicated on the cuteness of an animal. It was in fact only DFO that referred to the seal's cuteness textually (of course, never visually) and used the term "cute and cuddly" and, in another instance, the expression "cute as any human baby", implying that the anti-CSH sentiment and the compassion for the seal are premised on its physiognomy. The term "cute" was never observed in the data from the sample from the anti-CSH movement, but one of the few uses of the term can be seen in relation to SSCS's description of its efforts to protect sharks. SSCS writes:

Protecting sharks is a more difficult job than protecting dolphins or seals.

From the point of view of public relations, seals are cute and dolphins have that lovely natural smile. The shark, in contrast, shows its teeth and, hence, they look menacing.

In another text, SSCS also writes that "sea cucumbers are not cute, yet we protect those too". In that sense, sharks and sea cucumbers, which possess virtually no cuteness identifiers and a keen dissimilarity to humans, are implied to be just as worthy of protection. *The cuteness of seals is acknowledged, in passing, but specifically in reference to other species and never within the CSH discourse, or as a justification of the movement's opposition to it.* This distinction between the presence of visual cuteness identifiers and the absence of textual cuteness identifiers allows the anti-CSH movement to benefit from the sympathy brought on by the images of cute seals, while preventing the

perceived irrationality (and perhaps prejudicial selectivity) associated with the notion of defending an animal solely because of its physiognomic appeal.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that visuality is, in a certain way, embedded within the textual descriptions of the CSH by IFAW and SSCS. Schemes and tropes were found to be especially prevalent in the textual construction of the documents of the anti-CSH movement and generally absent from those of DFO. Even within the anti-CSH movement, SSCS's language was noticeably more imagistic than that of the IFAW, and reaffirmed its affinity for emotional appeals. A few examples of SSCS's use of schemes include alliteration (e.g. "Hyper Hearn Hysterically Heaps Histrionic Hype High Over Harp Seal Ban"), anaphora (see quotation on the intrinsic value of seals in section 4.1.2.1), anastrophe (e.g. On the floes dark death does walk).⁵² Likewise, appeals to *pathos* through tropes were widely used, mostly including an abundance of metaphors (e.g. "lambs of God", "vicious rape of the babies of the sea", and "cigarette smoking ape"). To a lesser extent, other tropes such as irony (e.g. "Loyola [Hearn], We'll Miss Ya"), and parallelism (e.g. Hot blood on the cold hard ice) were used.

5.1.2 Rhetoric of DFO

The textual and visual documents in DFO's strategy were found to be coherent and complementary, thereby each contributing to the overall representation of the CSH by DFO. However, it should be noted that DFO's strategy was one that was chiefly based on textuality or, in other words, the verbal articulation of the hunt. DFO used few visual documents, and the images tended to be largely repetitive, as many of them consisted of

⁵² Alliteration involves the repetition of a consonant sound at the beginning of several sequential word, anaphora refers to the emphasis of a word pattern by repeating it at the beginning of subsequent clauses, and anastrophe refers to an inversion of word patterns.

images of seal hordes and of Fishery Conservation Officers monitoring the hunt. DFO's mitigated use of visuality is congruent with its use of sober, factual and authoritative language. It was found that appeals to *ethos* and *logos* were the most common rhetorical approaches in the strategy, which contrasted with the anti-CSH movement's overt reliance on *pathos*. DFO's appeals to *ethos* were constructed by virtue of its role as a government department, and were especially evidenced in instances when DFO refers to its authoritative role as well as others when "DFO" became synonymous to "Government of Canada" and even "Canada" (e.g. "The Government of Canada has strict science-based regulations" and "Canada has maintained an active seal research program"). In that sense, DFO was seen to utilise the clout and authority associated with the Department, the Canadian government and Canada, so as to lend credibility to its argumentation. DFO's appeals to *logos* were shown by its predilection for sober and scientific language and is exemplified by its representation of the seal as a creature whose identity is defined by its biological belonging to animality, and the subsequent use of neutral and scientific terminology such as "females" (instead of "mothers") and "pup" (instead of "baby"). Furthermore, DFO appealed to logic and reason by rationalising the kill through its economic and cultural benefits, and by extensively citing data and statistics.

This trend partially supports Rose's (2000) findings that the Canadian government tends to use rational argumentation (*logos*) and avoid emotional arguments (*pathos*) in matters of contention, in order to appear as an objective party relying on facts and data to make decisions (p. 95-96). Rose notes, however, that, along with *pathos*, ethical appeals (*ethos*) tend to be avoided by the Canadian government, which was not found to be the case in this study. The findings on DFO's articulation of its pro-CSH position can also be

found to correspond to early literature on countermovements, which concluded that organisations that oppose social movements tend to resort to the use of facts, while neglecting to employ moral resources such as feelings and emotions (Mottl, 1980, p. 631).

More recent studies, such as those of Munro (1999) and Groves (2001), rather find that countermovements have fully adapted the emotion-filled approach to rhetoric previously monopolised by social movements. This, however, was not found to be the case in the matter of the CSH, as the anti-CSH movement's strategies utilised pathetic appeals much more overtly and creatively than did DFO. This may, however, be indicative of DFO's peculiar role as a countermovement and a governmental entity. There remained nonetheless some limited, yet specific, instances when DFO used blatant appeals to *pathos*, most expressly in their discussion of sealers and sealing communities, whose descriptions used emotionally-loaded language to construct a humanising and subjective representation of those impacted by the CSH. Scientific and objective language were exceptionally foregone, and sealers are described as "friends", "family members" and "ordinary folks" who are "friendly" and "welcoming". A comparable example of the presence of emotionality in the discourse on sealers can be found in the testimonials of sealers, where the sealers are given a voice and a chance to articulate the importance of sealing in their own lives. In that sense, by relaying the testimony of a sealer who explains his cultural and familial connection to the CSH,⁵³ DFO is conveying the existence of an emotional attachment to the hunt and appealing to the public's empathy.

⁵³ See exact quote in section 4.3.2

Furthermore, it should be noted that an increased use of pathetic appeals and visuality was found to be a noticeable change within the sample period studied, which consisted of two sealing periods. While DFO's website offered significant information on the CSH during the 2008 hunt, considerable qualitative changes in the messages and their presentation were noticed during the 2009 hunt. These changes included increased discussion on the cultural meaningfulness of the hunt, a new testimonial section that gave sealers the opportunity to reflect upon their personal connections to the hunt, and a slight increase in the number and diversity of images.⁵⁴ The qualitative transformation in the data from the first sealing season to the second was found to be significant, and is perhaps indicative of an increased reliance on visuality and pathetic appeals for the construction of pro-CSH messages.

5.2 Summary and Key Findings

At its core, the rhetorical articulation of the CSH is found to adhere to a social constructionist approach to nature, in that a pluralistic representation of the natural world in matters of social polemic is not only unavoidable, but in this case, it wholly represents the gist of the debate. It was found that the rhetoric of the CSH was chiefly articulated on the construal of the identity of the seal and that, while the themes of the kill, the sealers and the adversary and the self were prominent, their representation was not elaborated to the same extent and with the same depth. Seals are seen in the wild only in a few, relatively remote, locations. For most people, the seal's identity will be entirely mediated and will be merely a construct based on another party's conception of the

⁵⁴ This, of course, was not the focus of the study, and comparing the persuasive efforts surrounding two consecutive sealing seasons is not sufficient in discerning the existence of a definitive change in trends in the communication patterns of DFO. These changes were nonetheless found to be noteworthy and perhaps indicative of changing trends within DFO's approach to communicating the CSH that would warrant further academic attention.

animal. In this sense, the seal's identity is especially malleable and open to interpretation because of its secluded existence, one that is separate from the everyday life of most Canadian people. The anti-CSH movement represented the seal as a subject, and emphasised its cuteness, human iconicity, uniqueness, and usefulness when it is alive and uselessness when it is dead. Conversely, the Canadian government framed the seal as devoid of cuteness and underlined its animality, and relayed its identity as an individual to that of its species. It also emphasised its uselessness alive and usefulness dead.

The social constructionist perspective is further applied to the other elements of the CSH debate that fall outside of the natural world but which affect it decisively, such as the kill and the sealers. It was found that the anti-CSH's movement framed the kill to be an act that involved purposelessness and inexorable cruelty, which were demonstrated by representing the disturbing moment before the death and the shocking aftermath of the kill. The Canadian government, on the other hand, articulated the kill as a step towards the attainment of important human benefits, which ultimately justified death. The sealers' representation in the anti-CSH movement was found to be a rare element of discord between IFAW and SSCS. While IFAW did not vilify the sealers, SSCS portrayed them as sadistic, primitive and animalistic. DFO rather portrayed them in a positive light, and as having characteristics that are associated to traditional values. It was also found that SSCS and DFO both projected the sealers' identity onto their communities, thereby producing two very different, even opposed, conceptions of the rural sealing villages. The representation of the main actors of the CSH public debate were also the subject of a social construction, as each organisation tended to represent a positive account of itself and a negative account of the adversary, just as political parties in democratic regimes.

Both the anti-CSH movement and the Canadian government presented themselves as protectors and the adversaries as demagogical offenders. These findings bring about three additional conclusions, which have been found to permeate through the rhetorical analysis of the CSH polemic.

5.2.1 Sealing as a Uniquely Visual Experience

First, it is considered that the matter of the CSH is especially propitious to ignite a public polemic dominated by visuality. Likewise, certain elements inherent to it make the CSH an issue that can render its visual dissemination particularly powerful. It is considered that these include the seal's physiognomic makeup, which is more likely to appeal to human sympathy, as well as the setting of the hunt, which facilitates the production of shocking images.

Seals have certain physiognomic features which are likely to exert a powerful rhetorical force onto an audience. It was first seen that their aesthetic qualities, or namely, their cuteness, consist of a series of identifiers that are partly shared with human infants, thereby rendering seals more propitious to human protection and anthropomorphisation. The representation of a seal as infant-like or pet-like is especially congruous with its cute appearance, an image that quantitatively dominates among the visual documents used to illustrate the CSH polemic. In that sense, DFO's representation of seals as dangerous and harmful is admittedly incompatible with the harmless appearance of the seal. This rhetorical effect is not lost on DFO, as it notes that "[w]hile seals may appear to be 'cute and cuddly,' [... they] may respond aggressively by attacking", hence acknowledging an apparent irreconcilability between their textual argument and the imagined and most plausible identity of the seal. Similarly, the physiological position of the eyes on a seal's

head allows the instigation of a reciprocal gaze between the animal and its human viewer, thereby acting as a physiological basis for the instigation of *animalséance* (Derrida, 2002), and inter-species communication in two specific ways. First, there is a relevant empirical perspective, which consists of a biologically-defined physiognomic resemblance of humans to animals, and, second, the analytical perspective that posits an iconic relationship between the seal and human's appearances. Furthermore, the setting of the CSH lends itself to shocking photography. The operational context is unique in that the CSH is conducted outdoors, in areas that are generally accessible to protesters. Furthermore, the ice banks are areas quite simply devoid of trees or other obstacles which would hinder the protesters' ability to capture the hunt on film. The ice banks also represent a unique canvas for the making of compelling high-contrast images, where the redness of the blood is ominously contrasted with the whiteness of the ice. Blood is an inherent component of killing an animal, and the openness of the CSH makes it a hunt virtually unique in its kind, and an event that distinctively lends itself to visuality.

5.2.2 Singularity in Life and Death

The analysis showed that the anti-CSH movement tended to portray seals in a situation of singular life, yet mass death. Conversely, it was found that DFO displayed seals within a context of mass life and singular (or limited) death. The anti-CSH movement abundantly showcased the individual seal from an intimate or personal distance making direct eye contact with the viewer, thereby fostering kinship through the instigation of *animalséance*. Conversely, it was found that DFO tended to visually depict hordes of seals from a public distance, thereby mitigating their subjectivity and relinquishing the individual seal's identity to its species. This can be found to be a

recurring element of representation of the *other*, as Butler (2004), in relation to the 2003 American invasion of Iraq, points to aerial imagery as producing a distancing and fundamentally imperialist conception of individuals (p. 149), in a way that minimises the possibility of empathy.

In representing death, however, the patterns of display are inverted. The anti-CSH movement typically presents mass death, proving to be the only context in which images are taken aerially or from a greater distance. The seals, which have already been granted personhood, and whose lives have been endowed with an intrinsic value, are then displayed lifeless in a setting of mass carnage. The impropriety that was embedded in representing the seal from a personal distance is now transformed and embodied by displaying the slaughtered “being” among many others, in a way that can be reminiscent of shocking images of genocides and war scenes. DFO, in opposition, presents an image of dead seals from a personal distance. The proximity of the subject is uncharacteristic of DFO’s rendering of seals, but fundamentally presents the death with as much propriety as could be possible: it is shown to be controlled, bloodless, and limited. The death is an orderly event, not one that is done chaotically, but rather conducted methodologically. This paradox is indicative of the rhetorical priorities of each organisation. The anti-CSH movement emphasises the uniqueness of the seal and the subsequent horror of its death and DFO attempts to highlight the commonness of the seal, the meaninglessness of its life and the ensuing insignificance of its highly controlled death.

5.2.3 Ideological and Strategic Homology: Seals as Sealers, Sealers as Seals

In evaluating the anti-CSH and pro-CSH discourses concurrently, we find that the identity of sealers and seals vacillates between humanity and animality, and that both are

made to hold homologous roles within the CSH polemic. First, the anti-CSH movement frames seals as akin to humans through a process of anthropomorphism. Conversely, the anti-CSH movement (specifically SSCS) depicts sealers as possessing characteristics that are typically and negatively associated with animality, when it is construed as something strongly negative and inhuman. In that sense, the characteristics that are traditionally understood to make humans superior to animals remain intact, but the animality, construed in distinctively negative, even evil terms, is reassigned from the seal onto the sealer. Likewise, the humanity inherent to the sealer is instead affixed to the seal, and a new metaphysical hierarchy, unique to the CSH polemic, is proposed. DFO, conversely, reaffirms both the animality of the seal and the humanity of the sealer, thereby reinforcing the traditional metaphysical disassociation between the two.

Meanwhile, both sealers and seals are made to have a similar role within society, in the sense that each is threatened and is relying on another, more powerful, being to act its protector. It was found that the ideological perception of and the strategic approach to the seals by the anti-CSH movement and the sealers by the Canadian government tended to be homologous. The anti-CSH movement and DFO both engage in similar efforts of humanisation and personalisation in order to endow seals and sealers with subjectivity so as to foster public empathy to their plight. In both instances, a less powerful being is beleaguered and unjustly treated and its survival is thus threatened. It is in turn humanised, granted a subjectivity and a uniqueness that are staunchly being negated by the adversary. DFO's involvement with the sealers is one that fully mirrors the anti-CSH movement's relationship with seals. DFO frames itself as a protector of sealers, committed to ensuring their safety and protecting their rights, in the same way that the

anti-CSH movement acts as the guardian of seals. In that sense, the identity of seals and sealers turns out to be similar, as their intrinsic merit is being widely discussed, and each is seen to occupy a comparable and symmetrical role within the CSH discourse.

5.3 Limitations

Time and financial constraints linked to this study required a series of sampling restrictions to be implemented. This included selecting two groups from the animal rights movement within a discourse that includes many other powerful actors. While the findings pertaining to IFAW and SSCS do shed light on the practices of the anti-CSH movement as a whole, it would be misguided to suggest that the findings can be fully generalised. Similarly, only one department of the Canadian government was studied. Although it is considered to be the most significant actor in the matter of pro-CSH communication, a more complete examination of the governmental discourse could have included data from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office, all of which have had a hand in crafting and disseminating messages related to the CSH.

Additionally, the data studied was restricted to textual and visual documents included on the official websites, and consequently excluded any promotional documents that may have been distributed solely through public information forums, including protests and information sessions. Furthermore, the sampling excluded videos that were available on the websites, as well as *image-events* and the protests themselves, which have been identified as possessing a considerable rhetorical richness indicative of emerging trends in social protests (DeLuca, 2005). These methodological choices, which had the benefit of creating a research of a manageable scope, may have limited the

validity of the findings in relation to the overall CSH polemic, and may be unrepresentative of the diversity of its rhetorical articulation.

5.3.1 Potential Bias and Personal Connection to the CSH

It should be noted that I have worked for four years for DFO as an undergraduate and graduate student, more specifically for a program called *Small Craft Harbours*, which is an area organisationally and thematically unrelated to the management or communication of the CSH. As can be expected, however, my employment gave me the opportunity to meet individuals whose lives were directly impacted by the anti-CSH polemic (sealers, fishermen, and colleagues from Newfoundland and the Magdalen Islands) as well as individuals who were involved in articulating DFO's communication strategy. In retrospect, there is little doubt that my decision to study social movements and countermovements, and particularly the CSH, has been greatly influenced by my working in this environment. However, my interest in the matter of the CSH has consistently been contemplative and academic, and my curiosity is especially rooted in its exceptional relationship with rhetoric. I have never been a stakeholder in the matter, nor do I consider myself having a strong ideological propensity for either side of the CSH debate.

5.4 Contribution and Further Research

The study of the representation of the CSH in relation to the rhetorical strategies of the animal rights movement and the Canadian government contributes to the growing field of the rhetoric of social movements, most specifically in relation to matters of animal rights. While specifically focussing on the CSH, the study may nonetheless provide themes and findings that are transferable to other instances of social discourse.

This study can also hopefully enrich the limited academic analysis of the communication patterns of social movements and their countermovements.

The case of the CSH, while decidedly having significant repercussions on Canadian society, has had limited scholarly attention in the past decades. It is my hope that this research begins to fill this gap by shedding light on the recent rhetorical trends in anti-CSH and pro-CSH discourses alike. Further research in the matter could include an analysis that considers the media representation of the CSH, and their role in relaying and shaping the public polemic on the matter. The role of the media in matters of social movement is often discounted in the academic domain, and has not been studied in relation to the CSH in the last two decades (Lee, 1989). The matter of the CSH in general could benefit from further academic exploration, including, for instance, an analysis of the recent public diplomacy efforts instigated by the Canadian government in Europe, as well as the sizeable lobbying strategies by the anti-CSH movement.

This study could also be perceived as a stepping stone towards other research pertaining to the animal rights rhetoric within the broader scope of social movements. More specifically, it may be relevant to consider the rhetorical commonalities and differences that exist under the umbrella of moral activism. This interest is rooted in a body of literature that has focused on a homology that exists between the animal rights movement and other social movements (including the right to life movement and groups protesting capital punishment), that suggests that, while defending decidedly different causes, they share fundamental ideological commonalities (Black, 2003; Jasper, 2001; Adams, 1990). Most significantly, these movements operate under the ideological aegis that a living being inherently entitled to life is unjustly annihilated either through animal

slaughter or mistreatment, through abortion, or execution by the State. Furthermore, these groups embody the concept of *other-directed* movements, in that their proponents are not advocating a right for their own personal gain, but for the gain of others, whom they perceive to be unjustly beleaguered. No academic research, however, has investigated whether these similarities are materialised rhetorically, through the construction of documents intended for persuasion.

Furthermore, this research found that the notions of humanisation and animalisation (and objectification) of animality were at the basis of the rhetorical articulation of the CSH. In that sense, further research on the peculiar relationship of the rhetorical representations of humanity and animality may be of relevance. More specifically, it may be fruitful to consider the visual representations of humanity and animality within the general context of the objectification of beings. There is a rich literature pertaining to the plight of animals within a context of animal rights (e.g. Baker, 2001; Singer, 1990; Garner, 2005) and to the plight of humans, within a context of human rights (e.g. Hope, 1985; Reinhardt, 2006; Spelman, 1997). However, no academic work has yet studied or compared visual renderings of the subjugation of animality and humanity, and depictions of mistreatment and suffering. This matter could also be studied in relation to visual and textual representations of the theme of animality through depictions of human suffering (in images of torture, war and genocide, for instance), where the human dominance over another human may be found to be ideologically and rhetorically comparable to the dominion of humanity over animality. In that sense, it may be of interest to study whether the human is not only dehumanised but fully animalised. An analysis of this phenomenon would not only make for an original contribution to

knowledge, but would also partake in the growing interest of understanding and articulating the exceptional role of visuality within public culture

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APPENDIX A – Initial Analysis Grid

Pro-CSH	Anti-CSH
Hunt	
Necessary	Unnecessary
Compassionate	Cruel
Ecologically responsible	Ecologically irresponsible
Seals	
<i>As objects</i>	<i>As subjects</i>
Utility	
Useful as objects (essential commodities)	Useless as objects (nonessential commodities)
Useless as subjects (nuisances, dangerous and deserving of death)	Useful as subjects (benevolent, harmless and undeserving of death)
Singularity	
Social distance	Intimate distance
Seal as part of a herd	Seal as a unique being
No gaze (propriety)	Gaze (impropriety)
Contextuality	
Devoid of an anthropomorphising narrative (behaviours, feelings, activities that typically correspond to humans)	As part of an anthropomorphising narrative (behaviours, feelings, activities that typically correspond to humans)
Seal Hunters	
Compassionate	Cruel
Responsible	Irresponsible
Adversary	
Irresponsible	Irresponsible
Demagogues	Demagogues

APPENDIX B – Grid for Analysis

Pro-CSH	Anti-CSH
Hunt	
Necessary	Unnecessary
Compassionate	Cruel
Ecologically responsible	Ecologically irresponsible
Seals	
<i>As objects</i>	<i>As subjects</i>
Utility	
Useful as objects (essential commodities)	Useless as objects (nonessential commodities)
Useless as subjects (nuisances, dangerous and deserving of death)	Useful as subjects (benevolent, harmless and undeserving of death)
Singularity	
Social distance	Intimate distance
Seal as part of a herd	Seal as a unique being
No gaze (propriety)	Gaze (impropriety)
Contextuality	
Devoid of an anthropomorphising narrative (behaviours, feelings, activities that typically correspond to humans)	As part of an anthropomorphising narrative (behaviours, feelings, activities that typically correspond to humans)
Seal Hunters	
Compassionate	Cruel
Responsible	Irresponsible
Self vs. Adversary	
Animal rights movement	
Irresponsible	Responsible
Demagogues	Truthful
Canadian Government	
Responsible	Irresponsible
Truthful	Demagogues
Sealing communities	
Good (simple lifestyle, traditional)	Evil (greedy, primitive)
Needing the CSH	Not needing the CSH