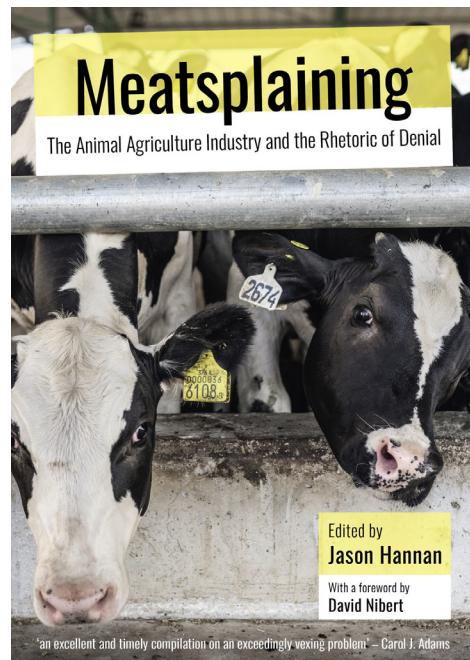


Jason Hannan (ed.): *Meatsplaining. The Animal Agriculture Industry and the Rhetoric of Denial*. Sydney University Press, 2020.

The cover of the book features black and white cattle with yellow and white ear tags in their ears. Two bovines reach out between a metal tube and the concrete structure towards a photographer. Jason Hannan is an Associate Professor in the Department of Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications at the University of Winnipeg in Canada. Other contributors are influential researchers and activists around the world. The book is part of the Animal Publics series, which publishes research by both established and emerging scientists. Animal Publics draws inspiration from the varying and changing practices of encountering humans and other animals. This volume is intended clearly for students and scholars of critical animal studies (CAS). It speaks to the many disciplines that contribute to the field of CAS: media studies, philosophy, political science, sociology, and literature.

In this collection, academic and activist contributors investigate the many forms of denialism spread by the animal agriculture industry. The animal



agriculture industry aggressively seeks to shield itself from public scrutiny. It uses a distinct set of rhetorical strategies to deflect criticism. These tactics are fundamental to modern animal agriculture but have long evaded critical analysis. "Both the fossil fuel industry and the meat industry have a discourse, an elaborate PR machinery, for denying their destructive effects, but no one had given a name to meat industry propaganda. So, I coined the term *meatsplaining*," Hannan says. Indeed, the myths and fantasies of the animal industry need to be clarified.

The book is divided into twelve

chapters. It has arisen out of frustration with the systematic and well-funded propaganda of the animal agriculture industry. Frustration can lead to a sense of futility, but also critique and resistance. The forewords immediately put on the table the contribution of modern industrial capitalism to the growth of the animal industry: in the United States, the land has been stolen from Indigenous peoples and wild animals. Immigrants and slaughterhouse workers have been oppressed. In the early 20th century, slaughterhouse companies sponsored some radio programs. In Canada, slaughterhouse companies supported meat consumption and grilling. For decades, advertising campaigns in Western countries have built images of meat-eating people, the need for meat, and that meat consumption is essential for human health.

So today, when we buy a product, we only see the price, not the chains of production, the whole complex history and these exploitative relationships behind it. The industry has launched a fierce public relations campaign to discredit its critics, controlled the popular narrative due to climate change, and protected its public image. Like the fossil fuel industry, the animal agriculture industry resorts to rhetoric of denial. The denial takes many forms: the denial of violence against animals, the denial of environmental pollution and destruction, and the denial of the link between meat consumption and

health problems.

The term ‘meatsplaining’ in the title of the book is an umbrella concept for all these multiple denial mechanisms. Of course, this term also plays with the already well-known concept of ‘mansplaining’. The term does not translate or open to the reader in the same way in Finnish as in English. Mansplaining is a term that refers to a situation where someone comments and explains something in an overconfident manner with the assumption that one knows more about the subject than the person one is talking to does. Like mansplaining, also meatsplaining acts as a silencing mechanism. The extreme condescension and patronizing character of meatsplaining serve to shut down critics of the meat industry, to paint them as and reduce them to petulant and ignorant children, to eliminate them from the sphere of rational discourse. It also delineates discursive boundaries. It determines what happens in animal farms and slaughterhouses. It tells you what constitutes normal and rational, what is credible and part of the mainstream. Although the term is addressed through industrial rhetoric, the phenomenon can also be found in interpersonal relationships. I think it is important to emphasize that the term does not mean and is not limited to the patronizing experienced by individuals but is the systematic green-washing of large companies and entities, or more specifically, it's more than green-

washing, I would say i.e. healthywashing of farm animals.

The first chapter focuses on farm animals, the second on politics, the third on vegan representation, and the fourth on resistance. The titles are in the table of contents independently without the names of the authors. They could have been simplified and subdivided even more clearly. Now, the headlines do not tell the content of the book easily and approachable enough to a reader who is unfamiliar with the subject.

The work covers a wide range of topics, including, for example, beef marketing in Canada, Dietary Guidelines for Americans, meat lobbying in the EU, animal transport in Australia, veganism, and the working roles of other species. Anita Krajnc's text "The Save Movement: Bearing Witness to Suffering Animals Worldwide" discusses the origins and strategy of the Save Movement. Lisa Barca offers journalists better ways to report on vegans and veganism.

In addition to the previous topics, included is also a chapter written by Saara Kupsala, who defended her dissertation at the University of Eastern Finland, which deals with the marketing campaign for family farms and so-called ethical meat. Industrial poultry production and slaughtering are not usually marketed. Kupsala's

material is a campaign in which food and lifestyle influences visited a broiler farm and a slaughterhouse, and after their visit shared their experiences on their blogs. Because animal activists and people who are criticizing the animal industry have shown the hidden everyday practices of animal production, the meat industry must react and change its communication strategies. The requirements of openness and transparency have led to the showing production facilities and, for example, the construction of viewing corridors in production and slaughterhouse facilities.

With the global zoonotic pandemic and biodiversity crisis in our hands, this book is timely and extremely valuable in this era of mass extinction. As I write this, the dairy industry and other lobbies have continued a campaign against plant-based milk in the EU. Already earlier, for example, France has strongly pursued a strict line restricting the names of plant-based products referring to meat. The meat industry has of course lobbied for this line and will continue to manipulate public opinion and for that, we should evolve our critique and resistance.

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