This is a peer-reviewed, post-print (final draft post-refereeing) version of the following published document:

Stibbe, Arran ORCID logoORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3854-9854 (2003) As Charming as a Pig: The Discursive Construction of the Relationship Between Pigs and Humans. Society and Animals, 11 (4). pp. 375-392. doi:10.1163/156853003322796091

This is a peer-reviewed, post-print (final draft post-refereeing) version of the following published document:

Stibbe, Arran (2003). *As Charming as a Pig: The Discursive Construction of the Relationship Between Pigs and Humans.* **Society & Animals, 11 (4), 375-392. ISSN 1063-1119**

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR TEXT.

As charming as a pig: The discursive construction of the relationship between pigs and humans

Arran Stibbe, Chikushi Jogakuen University

Abstract

In the past, pigs were kept near their owners' homes, ate leftovers from their owners' kitchens, and enjoyed a generally close relationship with humans. According to Leach (1964), the closeness of the relationship, combined with its ultimate end in the killing of the pig, led to a sense of shame. This shame manifested itself in negative expressions about pigs within the English language, which remain to this day. However, the relationship between humans and pigs is becoming increasingly distant, with decisions which effect pigs' lives being made in the offices of agricultural industry executives far away from the intensive farms the pigs live in. The new relationship has led to the evolution of a new discourse about pigs, the discourse of the modern pork industry. This new discourse, because of its technical and scientific nature, does not contain the explicit insults of mainstream discourse. Yet embedded within the discourse are a series of implicit ideological assumptions designed to justify the confinement and exploitation of pigs in high intensity farms. This paper investigates the discourses surrounding pigs in both mainstream (British) culture and the pork industry, and discusses attempts which have been made to challenge these discourses.

Introduction

In Victorian Britain, the relationship between people and pigs could be described as one of closeness. Pigs were an integral part of village life, living in close proximity with their owners and being fed on leftover food from their owners' kitchen and table (Malcolmson and Mastoris 1998). However, Leach (1964:51) describes how because pigs were 'nearly a member of the household', people felt 'a rather special guilt.' Leach continues: 'After all, sheep provide wool, cows produce milk, chickens produce eggs, but we rear pigs for the sole purpose of killing and eating them, and this is rather a shameful thing, a shame which quickly attaches to the pig itself.' This shame manifested itself as a huge array of insulting expressions related to pigs which entered the English language itself.

Now the relationship between pigs and humans is one of distance, as the relentless push for cheap pork has led to pigs being kept indoors in intensive conditions. With the aid of technology and machinery a few people look after hundreds of pigs, while for most people the only contact they have with pigs is on their dinner plate. However, the intense negatively towards pigs within the English language remains, and since language is intimately bound up with culture, the image of the pig continues to play a part in English culture. As Fairclough (2003:18) points out 'cultures exist as languages, or what I shall rather call discourses'.

The first section of this article presents a brief analysis of the discourse surrounding pigs in mainstream British culture, followed by a detailed analysis of the discourse of the pork industry in the second section. The final section discusses attempts which have been made to challenge both mainstream and industry discourse.

British mainstream discourse and the pig-human relationship

Examining the uses of the word 'pig' in a corpus of contemporary English such as the British National Corpus (BNC) reveals just how widespread and negative the constructions of pigs are. The BNC consists of one hundred million words extracted from a wide range of books, newspapers, television programs, magazines and recorded everyday speech. And within the BNC is an astonishingly large range of metaphors, similes, and idioms about pigs, far more than for any other animal. Rats, snakes, dogs and cats do not even come close, showing how deeply the pig is entrenched in British culture. In total there are 62 different non-literal uses of the words *pig*, *hog* and *swine* in the corpus, and these are summarised in Table 1.

Expression	Gram				
		rotten mean pig	Adj + N	the car's a pig	N
		savage pig	Adj + N	you pig!	N
		self-righteous	Adj + N	pig!	N
awful pig	Adj + N	selfish little	Adj + N	he is a pig	N
beastly pig	Adj + N	selfish pig	Adj + N	behaving like a	N
capitalist pig	Adj + N	self regarding	Adj + N	hog the limelight	V
drunken swine	Adj + N	stupid pig	Adj + N		
fascist pigs	Adj + N	the pig police	Adj + N		
fat pig	Adj + N	unbelieving	Adj + N	making a pig of	N of
filthy pig	Adj + N	unfeeling pig	Adj + N	as sick as a pig	simile
foreign pigs	Adj + N	ungallant swine	Adj + N	tuck in like a pig	simile
greedy pig	Adj + N	unscrupulous	Adj + N	bleeding like a	simile
absolute pig	Adj + N	untidy pig	Adj + N	as fat as a pig	simile
ignorant pig	Adj + N	old fat pig	Adj + N	drunk as a pig	simile
insufferable pig	Adj + N	*Meaning dependant presuppositions*		happy as a pig in	simile
irritating pig	Adj + N			happy as a pig in	simile
lucky pig	Adj + N	a pig sty	N mod	rich as a pig in	simile
lying pig	Adj + N	go the whole	Idiom	squealing like a	simile
male chauvinist	Adj + N	a pigs ear of it	Idiom	sweating like a pig	simile
misogynist	Adj + N	a pigs breakfast	Idiom	stubborn as a pig	simile
murderous pigs	Adj + N	a major pig out	Idiom	stinking pig	Adv +
patronising pig	Adj + N	to pig out	V + out	pig sick of them	Adv +
pompous pig	Adj + N	she was a pig to	N	pig ignorant	Adv +

Table 1: Non-literal uses of the words *pig*, *swine* and *hog* from the BNC

Even a cursory glance at this table reveals the overwhelmingly negative attitude toward pigs expressed in everyday British English. With only a few exceptions such as *you lucky pig* and *happy as a pig in the mire,* the expressions seem to be attributions of unpleasant or negative characteristics to a third party. Examination of the context in which such expressions occur reveals *presuppositions,* taken-for-granted facts about the world which lie behind the expressions (Kadmon 2000, Gazdar 1978). Thus 'You are as fat as a pig' presupposes and takes it to be common knowledge that pigs are (very) fat animals. Extracting and analysing presuppositions is an effective way of revealing the cultural model, or in Barthes (1972) terms, the *mythology,* underlying linguistic usage.

Presuppositions are a particularly powerful way of building and sustaining the models on which a culture is based. The expression 'as selfish as a pig' presupposes that pigs are (very) selfish, without any kind of overt statement, such as 'pigs are selfish', which could be proved wrong. As expressions are repeated in the general currency of society, the mythology of pigs as selfish creatures is perpetuated.

An expression such as 'foreign pig', of course, does not presuppose that pigs are foreign, and grammatically all sentences of the form 'Adjective + Pig' do not necessarily contain such

3

presuppositions. The grammar of the sentence in which the word *pig* is found is therefore critical when analysing presuppositions (hence the arrangement of Table 1 according to grammatical structures).

Within the 'Adjective + pig' category (column 1 of table 1) are a range of expressions where 'pig' refers to a 'person who is improperly assuming superiority', ie: *male chauvinist pig, patronising pig, misogynist swine, pompous pig, self-righteous pig, self-regarding swine* and *fascist pig.* However, it would be a mistake to suppose that 'assuming superiority' belongs to the cultural model of pigs, since it is not presupposed, and there is no additional evidence of expressions which contain corresponding presuppositions (such as 'as patronising as a pig' or 'as misogynist as a pig').

In the expressions in the second column of Table 1, the presupposition is not explicitly given within the sentence, but is a function of the meaning of the sentence. For example, if 'She is behaving like a pig!' is used to mean 'She is behaving greedily' then this presupposes that 'pigs are greedy'. Since the word 'greedy' is not explicitly mentioned, it is the readers/hearers of the sentence themselves who must supply the concept of greed. This is what Fairclough (1989:85) calls 'gap-filling', and it is a particularly powerful way of entrenching cultural models since hearers/readers are forced to supply negative presuppositions to interpret the sentences.

Analysing only direct presuppositions (column 3 of Table 1), and those meaning-dependent presuppositions (column 2) where the context makes the meaning explicit, we can gain an impression of the cultural model behind the use of the word 'pig' in the BNC. Of course the BNC itself contains only a fraction of the many uses of the word *pig* in English, but we can get a general idea of just how negative these uses are by using the BNC as a spotlight. According to the data in the BNC, within British culture, pigs are presupposed to be *ignorant, greedy, untidy, stubborn, selfish, badly behaved, fat, get very drunk and sick, squeal loudly when 'stuck', become happy in the 'mire', 'poop' or 'shit' and have a sloppy breakfast.*

While the cultural model bears little relation to actual pigs, it bears all the hallmarks of cultural models in other areas, such as racism or sexism. Members of the dominant group base their feelings of superiority and self-worth on the supposed shortcomings of another group, 'basking in the reflection a negatively constituted other' (Valentine 1998:2.2).

However, this is a very unstable base for self-esteem since deep down everyone knows that the other group does not, in fact, have these shortcomings. Rather than finding a new basis for self-esteem, for example co-operation and respect, the supposed shortcomings are simply trumpeted more loudly and entrenched ever deeper in everyday language.

In Victorian times, the inferior image of pigs presumably helped provide a barrier between humans and pigs, overcoming cultural taboos against killing those who are close to us. The discourse of the pork industry could equally be argued to provide a barrier between humans and

pigs, although in this case it is a barrier which justifies not just killing pigs, but also keeping them confined indoors in high intensity facilities for their whole lives.

Pork industry discourse and the pig - human relationship

The discourse of the pork industry can be characterised as scientific and technical. There are therefore no explicit insults: pigs are never officially described as *ignorant, selfish, greedy, nasty* or *filthy.* Yet it is possible, within scientific and technical discourse, to insert hidden ideological assumptions which none-the-less construct pigs in a negative way. It is easy to notice the explicit insults hurled at pigs in mainstream discourse, and counter them with facts about, for example, the cleanliness and sociability of pigs. However, noticing the implicit ideological assumptions in technical discourse requires deeper analysis.

This section conducts such an analysis, using the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1992b, Van Dijk 1993). The analysis focuses on the standard reference manual of the pork industry, the *Pork Industry Handbook* (PIH 2002[1]), a document which both reflects and propagates pork industry discourse. According to its own publicity, the Pork Industry Handbook (henceforth PIH) is written by 'more than 800 authors and reviewers', and is used in '45 states representing about 99% of the pork production in the US' (PIH2003: L233). And within the information sheets which make up the PIH, lost amongst countless instructions for the proper raising of pork, is nothing less than the redefinition of an entire species.

Analysis of The Pork Industry Handbook (PIH)

The PIH states that 'Since the early 1970's, the swine industry has continued to move towards specialisation, mechanisation and enclosed housing for the rearing of livestock' (PIH 2002:104). A similar statement could be made about the language of the PIH, which has become specialised and technologised (to use Fairclough's 1992b term) to serve the goals of the industry. And the goals are clear: 'the business of producing pork is the primary, and most frequently, the only objective' (PIH 2002:83), 'The goal of the workplace is to minimise the amount of time (labor) spent on…each animal unit' (PIH 2002:8), and above all else, 'The success of a swine enterprise is measured in terms of profit' (PIH 2002:100).

To achieve these goals pigs have been linguistically re-conceptualised on a fundamental level, starting with a redefinition of the concept of their 'health':

Quote 1) Health is the condition of an animal with regard to the performance of its vital functions. The vital functions of the pig are reproduction and growth. They are vital because they are major contributors to the economic sustainability of the pork production enterprise. (PIH 2002:140)

Usually, 'vital functions' refer to those bodily functions upon which life depends, such as digestion or the circulation of blood. However, in the redefinition of Quote 1, the bodily functions of the pigs are not vital to the individual animal but to the 'pork production enterprise'. This metaphorically[2] constructs the enterprise as a huge animate being whose life depends on making a profit, with pigs rendered collectively vital but individually dispensable cells making up this larger being.

Disease is defined in similar terms: 'Disease is a major risk to farm sustainability, thus protection of herd health is a top priority' (PIH 2002:140). Note that 'health' has been replaced by the term 'herd health', leading to a situation where 'Verbally subsumed into the flock or herd, nonhumans disappear as individuals' (Dunayer 2001:140). PIH (2002:140) describes the way that designing health strategies 'for herds of animals requires a very different approach than those used for individual animals' (PIH 2002:140). And when pigs disappear as individuals, their individual health problems also disappear from official consideration.

Individual pigs each have a function in keeping the 'enterprise-being' alive, and their lives are defined narrowly in terms of this function. Linguistically, adjectival pre-modifiers are used to incorporate the function into the designation of individuals. Thus we find *nursery pig* (PIH 2002:146), *grower pig* (ibid), *farrowing pig* (ibid), *feeder pig* (PIH 2002:6), *finisher pig* (PIH 2002:146), *carry-over sow* (PIH 2002:83), *cull sow* (PIH 2002:123), *market hog* (PIH 2002:6), and *slaughter hog* (PIH 2002:12).

Health is measured solely in terms of ability to perform the desired function, allowing genuine health problems which do not conflict with the function to be ignored. Examples of this are given in quotes 2-4:

Quote 2) Claw injuries have been shown to be greater on total slats than on partial slats. However, the effect of claw injuries on growth rate appears to be slight (PIH 2002:53)

Quote 3) Pigs can be subjected to very high levels of ammonia for a relatively long time with little adverse production effect (PIH 2002:54)

Quote 4) [about swine flu] Pigs develop high fevers…exhibit rapid forced breathing…a harsh barking cough…pregnant animals frequently abort. Although pigs *appear* to be quite ill…death loss is minimal (PIH 2002:141 emphasis added)

In quote 3 the irritation and respiratory problems associated with ammonia are ignored because they do not effect the 'growth rate'. In quote 4, despite the long list of symptoms, pigs only 'appear' to be ill, because financial loss due to their death is minimal. According to the PIH definition of health, pigs are only 'actually' ill when their health problems have a financial impact.

Having defined health in terms of the 'performance of its [the pig's] vital functions' (PIH 2002:140), the term 'health' is often dropped completely and subsumed within the replacement term 'performance'. This can lead to macabre conclusions, for example, that even if up to a quarter of piglets die due to disease or injury the herd still performs well and hence is 'healthy'. This can be seen in quote 5 which discusses the advantages of removing piglets from their mother early and giving them broad-spectrum antibiotics.

Quote 5) Postweaning mortality is increased (ranging up to 12% to 25%)… However, substantial benefits have been reported in the finishing performance (PIH 2002:111)

Medical intervention for the sake of 'performance' is quite different from medical intervention to save lives or reduce pain. For example the 'Hysterectomy-derived, colostrum deprived germ free (microbe free) pigs' (PIH 2002:139) are produced by 'opening the uterus and extracting the pigs by hysterectomy…' and then rearing them 'in isolation…on artificial milk replacer' (PIH 2002:139). The result: 'infections disease levels may be low and pig performance excellent' (PIH 2002:139).

Fortuitously for the pigs, because shivering wastes 'feed energy to frictional losses that would otherwise go to growth' (PIH 2002:54), so PIH (2002:54) recommends keeping pigs warm, although it expresses this as 'optimal thermal conditions for pork production'. However, not all measures which improve productivity are so comfortable for the pigs. In particular 'the amount of space needed per pig for optimal performance' (PIH 2002: 55) does not necessarily correspond to the amount of space a pig needs to move around freely (quote 6).

Quote 6) Cages for weaned pigs have zestfully captured the attention of pork producers. They do offer … improved pig performance. A 4 x 4 ft. cage will accommodate a litter of about 8 pigs up to 40lb. (PIH 2002:70)

However, the comfort and well-being of pigs *is* mentioned in several places in the PIH. For example: PIH (2002:69) recommends planning for *'animal comfort…*and labor efficiency'; PIH (2002:140) describes the effect of disease on 'performance…and *animal well-being*'; PIH (2002:146) recommends 'euthanasia' as the best option for 'various *pig welfare*' and 'economic' reasons, and PIH (2002:31) recommends copper for 'normal *pig* growth and *well-being*' (emphasis added). The pattern is clear: The word *pig* is used a modifier of the words 'comfort', 'well-being' or 'welfare', making expressions like *pig comfort* appear to be variables in equations. And frequently, in proximity to 'pig comfort' are expressions relating to economic factors. Variables can be adjusted, and as 'pig welfare' is only one of the factors in equations aimed at maximising profit, the well-being of pigs may well be sacrificed if it conflicts with profitability. For example 'while dry bedding can be used to keep pigs more comfortable, it is expensive…and is not compatible with…slotted floors' (PIH 2002:66).

In fact, the comfort of individuals is not quantifiable and so is conveniently left out of the many tables and equations in the PIH. Mortality, however, which in one sense is the opposite of comfort, is quantifiable (see Dunayer 2001:134), and does appear in equations (eg, quote 7).

Quote 7)

$$\text{Percent mortality} = \frac{\text{No.died in nursery and/or growing-finishing stage}}{\text{Total no.entering for this group}} \times 100$$

(PIH 2002:100)

And so, like comfort, mortality becomes a variable which can be adjusted for profit. The table provided by PIH (2002:100 table 1) suggests that in a farm with 'excellent performance', mortality is less than 10% from birth to weaning, the amount of space pigs live in is less that 2.8sq ft, and more than 2500 hogs are produced per full time labourer per year. The tables and jargon and equations hide an ideology which seems to dictate, in the pursuit of profit, that pigs should be as crowded and neglected as possible, but not so much so that a financially significant percentage die.

The death of pigs due to the diseases and injuries associated with intensive farming is rendered not as a tragedy, but as a purely economic consideration through the phrase 'death loss' (eg, in quote 8).

Quote 8) …in large continuous flow operations…Death loss and the number of chronically ill poor-doing pigs that result may be quite high (PIH 2002: 141)

The use of the expression 'death loss' avoids mentioning who died, and is used elsewhere as a euphemism for the 'dead bodies of pigs' who die from illness or injury (quote 9).

Quote 9) In a typical scenario, a bin is filled with three months death losses (133)

Among the 'death losses' are animals who, having been ill or injured have been the subject of another euphemism, what PIH (2002:146) calls 'humane euthanasia' (see Dunayer 2001:137, 141). The fact that this is a euphemism is illustrated in PIH (2002:18), quote 10, which describes one method for performing 'humane euthanasia'.

Quote 10) hold the piglet by its hind legs and forcefully hit the piglet's head against a hard surface such as concrete (PIH 2002:18)

The use of the pronoun 'it' in Quote 10 is perhaps not accidental since it makes the piglet seem more like an object than a baby, making it easier to kill him or her. The pronouns 'he' and 'she' are, in fact, used in the PIH for less violent scenarios, but pigs are often objectified by the pronoun 'it' (eg, PIH 2002:54,140,58,122,128,87 etc).

Another way of objectifying pigs is through the use of the metaphor 'pig as a machine' (Coats 1989:32; Stibbe 2002). Singer (1975:126) quotes the pork industry's explicit statement that a sow should be 'thought of, and treated as, a valuable piece of machinery'. However, the PIH itself contains no such direct linking of pigs to machines, perhaps because animal rights activists use such examples to illustrate the cruelty of the pork industry. Instead, the PIH uses expressions which *presuppose* that pigs are machines, making the ideology both covert and more powerful. Quotes 11-15 are examples of this, with emphasis added.

Quote 11) As long as boars remain ***structurally sound*** and are aggressive breeders, fertility is generally maintained (PIH 2002: 1)

Quote 12) Adequate ***boar power*** is critically essential to take advantage of synchronization of postweaning heat. (PIH 2002: 8)

Quote 13) Pigs suppress eating and increase ***water intake*** during periods of heat stress (PIH 2002: 54)

Quote 14) To prevent ***sow breakdown*** make sure the lactation ration is properly fortified…(PIH 2002: 8)

Quote 15) ***sow durability*** and temperament are very important considerations (PIH 2002: 145)

There are many other examples of the metaphorical reconstructed of pigs as inanimate objects. Pigs are presented as resources which are 'produced' (PIH 2002:85), have 'salvage value' (PIH 2002:8) and appear in lists with other kinds of resources, eg, 'efficient flow of feed, hogs and waste' (PIH 2002:70). The word 'damage' is used rather than 'injury' (PIH 2002:8); piglets are 'processed' (tails cut off, teeth cut, ears cut, castrated) (PIH 2002:18); boars are 'used' (PIH 2002:83) and sows are talked about in terms of 'volume slaughtered' rather than number (PIH 2002: 132).

Finally, there are several cases in the PIH where the distinction between living animals and meat products becomes blurred. Hedgepeth (1998:76) describes this as a difficulty in viewing 'hogs as hogs rather than as neatly packaged collected assortments of ambulatory pork', and Adams (1993:204) captures the attitude with the simple expression 'To be a pig is to be pork'. Quotes 16-18 are examples of expressions where living animals are equated with meat.

Quote 16) Some hogs have weak hindquarters, and they are more likely to fall down and "split." The damaged meat has to be trimmed (PIH 2002:116)

Quote 17) Choosing a meaty, lean herd sire will probably do more to improve carcass leanness than will altering various environmental aspects (PIH 2002:100)

Quote 18) One should incorporate meat-type animals into the breeding herd…(PIH 2002:26)

The creation of a high intensity pig farm demands a great deal of technology, including cages, farrowing stalls, and machines to regulate the environment and flow of feed and waste. But as important as the technology is language itself, because language plays a central role in the design, construction, and everyday operation of the farm. Nowhere does the discourse of the PIH explicitly state that pigs should be treated as objects, that their pain and misery should be ignored, that they are just pork rather than animals. Instead, the ideology is covertly conveyed and perpetuated in the equations, tables, technical jargon and, above all else, in presuppositions permeating the book. And the ideology is all the more powerful and resistant to criticism through being covert.

Alternative constructions of pigs

When ideology is implicit, it cannot be resisted through direct opposition of the propositional content of the language it is embedded in, since the ideology appears only indirectly in presuppositions. However, ideology *can* be challenged through critical analysis of the language itself, which exposes presuppositions and the interests that they serve. Critical language awareness has, in fact, been a part of the animal rights movement since its inception (usually accredited to Peter Singer's 1975 book *Animal Liberation*). Singer (1975) describes the appalling conditions on pig farms and intersperses his description with quotations from pork industry sources, and so implicitly reveals the relationship between industry discourse and the conditions in which pigs are forced to live and die. Dunayer (2001) goes further by explicitly describing the relationship between language and oppression, and conducting linguistic analysis of a variety of discourses which construct pigs and other animals. Such critical language awareness has the potential to undermine discourses by revealing their hidden ideological assumptions, and thus taking away the power that implicitness gives them (see Fairclough 1992a, 1999, Males 2000).

In addition to raising critical language awareness, Dunayer (2001:179-201) provides a complete set of guidelines for 'countering speciesism', which could be considered a form of *verbal hygiene* (Cameron 1995). Among the many guidelines Dunayer gives is the suggestion that the term 'farm animal' is a term to avoid, alternatives being 'enslaved nonhuman' or 'food-industry captive' (ibid: 193). For 'bacon, ham, pork (etc.)' the guidelines recommend 'pig flesh' (ibid: 193). An alternative for 'pork producer' is 'pig enslaver' (ibid: 194), 'cull' is 'murder' (ibid: 194), a 'farm' is a 'confinement facility', and the farmer is a 'nonhuman-animal exploiter' (ibid: 195).

Overt attempts to change discourses, however, run into an effective weapon used by conservative society to resist social change: the charge of 'political correctness' (PC). As Fairclough (2003:21) points out, PC is an identification 'imposed upon people by their political opponents', providing 'a remarkable effective way of disorientating sections of the left'. Frequently, the media create absurd examples which mock attempts to change language (Mills 2003:89 gives the examples of 'vertically challenged' and 'personhole cover').

Non-speciesist language guidelines are already receiving similar treatment: a list of PC terms appearing on several websites (eg, Political 2003) gives the replacement 'Stolen non-human animal fibres' for *wool*, in the same list as 'Aquatically challenged' for *drowning*. One correspondent, commenting on guidelines for non-speciesist language, wrote 'You mean at a fast food counter it would list "murdered bovine with brutally massacred swine strips" When all I want is a bacon burger? What a JOKE!' Just as anti-sexism has had to define itself 'in contradistinction

to…what has been defined as politically correct' (Mills 2003:90), so the animal rights movement may find it has to do the same.

A way of providing alternative discourses which avoids the issue of 'correctness' is *poetic activism.* Poetic activism is based on the appreciation of 'the power of language to make new and different things possible and important - an appreciation which becomes possible only when one's aim becomes an expanding repertoire of alternative descriptions rather than The One Right Description' (Rorty, in Gergen 1999:63). While verbal hygiene tends to represent its prescriptive alternatives as more accurate, truthful or 'correct', poetic activism offers 'provocative, glamouring, and compelling ways of talking and writing, ways that unsettle the common sense, taken for granted realities, and invite others into new dialogic spaces' (Gergen 2003).

A prime example of poetic activism applied to pigs is Hedgepeth's (1998), *The Hog Book.* Hedgepeth firstly challenges dominant discourses through parody and irony (rather than intimations of falsehood), and then supplies new ways of thinking about pigs through the application of new discursive constructions. The use of parody to challenge the mainstream and pork industry discourses is illustrated in quotes 20 and 21 respectively.

> *Quote 20)* "Hog," to many people means any obscenely rotund beast with a tropism for mud who trundles filthily along oinking (Hedgepeth 1998, 21)

> *Quote 21)* [In an artificial insemination system] sows are viewed as simple pork machines and boars are vaguely undesirable characters who happen to make sperm…[the system has] the aim of turning out germ-free, computer-recorded pieces of living pigmeat. (Hedgepeth 1998:99)

Hedgepeth's reconstruction of pigs employs novel metaphors, such as the *human body as pig grave* metaphor with which the book commences (quote 22).

> *Quote 22)* DEDICATED…to the millions of porkers who've gone to their final resting sites inside us…I'd like to call them all by name, but the list is long and I cannot remember. (Hedgepeth 1998)

This metaphor resists the industry's 'To be a pig is to be pork' ideology, and quote 22 also provides an unusual way of emphasising the individuality of pigs, resisting the loss of individuality that occurs when pigs (count noun) become pork (mass noun) (see Adams 1993). Throughout the book, there are countless presuppositions which (re)construct pigs as 'clear-headed, perspicacious beings

with feelings' (ibid:160). To give just one example, quote 23 presupposes that pigs have a 'spirit', ie, are beings with feelings.

Quote 23) Yet for every gain in efficiency there's an equivalent loss in spirit.

To provide a 'new definition of hogness', Hedgepeth uses intertextual borrowing (Fairclough 1992b:101) to apply discourses from other domains to the human-pig relationship. One of these intertextual borrowings makes use of the discourse of psychology (quotes 24-25).

Quote 24) Cultural Hogrophobia…is a socially institutionalised fear of hogness (ibid: 6)

Quote 25) We rely upon the hog in many ways for support and for a sense of definition - definition of ourselves, for instance, as presumably superior, handsomer and all-round more legitimate creatures. It's in this way that we subconsciously employ the hog (ibid 200)

Paralleling self-help psychology, Hedgepeth claims that in coming to terms with hogrophobia you can develop a 'new hog consciousness' (ibid 197) and 'eventually emerge as a changed and better person' (ibid: x). This change is constructed not just as psychological growth but spiritual growth too, through intertextual borrowings from the domain of spiritual discourse. Quotes 26 and 27 illustrate the use of spiritual discourse to contribute to what Hedgepeth calls a 'massive redefinition of hogness for the new age' (ibid: 26).

Quote 26) True 'hogritude' - the mystical essence and condition of being an actual hog - demands extended periods of meditation. (ibid: 173)

Quote 27) The all-pervasive essence of Hog had resonated across time and insinuated itself deep into…our collective mind. [We are] awaiting some hopeful opportunity to transcend ourselves…[and pigs provide]…an ideal agent for inducing us to break our narrow containments…and thereby scale new heights of enlightenment and psychic liberation…(ibid 198)

Like his parodies of the discourses of oppression, Hedgepeth's application of psychological and spiritual discourse to pigs is exaggerated, tongue-in-cheek and not intended to be taken (too) seriously. This derails any attempt to criticise the work for being politically correct.

13

Conclusion

In the end, a pig farm is essentially a relationship: a relationship between two groups who happen to be from different species, one human and one porcine. The trend towards the end of the 20th and the start of the 21st century is for this relationship to be increasingly remote, with decisions which have profound consequences on the lives of pigs being taken in distant, air-conditioned offices. And the increasingly citified general population is far more likely to come across pigs in insulting linguistic expressions than face-to-face. The relationship, therefore, becomes more and more mediated by language.

Textual mediation in itself is neither good nor bad. Clearly, discourse has the power to legitimise relationships in which one group causes immense suffering to the other. And the many examples from the pork industry discussed in this paper suggest that the discourse of the pork industry is doing exactly that.

But equally, language can be used imaginatively to resist dominant discourses and open up new alternatives, as Dunayer (2001), Hedgepeth (1998) and others are doing. If these attempts are successful, future generations may refer to pigs as 'enslaved non-humans', or, perhaps preferably, as 'creatures of boundless charm and enchantment' (Hedgepeth 1998:160). Whatever the change is, change is necessary, and Hedgepeth (1998:199) eloquently expresses the reason why:

> And so we go on about the routine exploitation of our hogs in the name of Agriculture or Industry & Commerce or Better Pork; and in the end it all contributes to the vast-scale devaluation of life itself, for one cannot deny the legitimacy of another creature without diminishing one's own.

References

Adams, C. (1993). The feminist traffic in animals, in G Gaard (ed) *Ecofeminism: women, animals, nature.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press 195-218

Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies (translated, original 1957).* London: Vintage

Cameron, D. (1995). *Verbal hygiene.* London: Routledge

Coats, D. (1989). *Old MacDonald's factory farm.* New York: Continuum

Dunayer, J. (2001). *Animal equality: language and liberation.* Derwood, Maryland: Ryce

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman

Fairclough, N. (1992a) *Critical Language Awareness*. London: Longman

Fairclough, N. (1992b). *Discourse and Social Change.* Cambridge: Polity Press

Fairclough, N. (1999). Global Capitalism and Critical Awareness of Language. Language Awareness 8(2), 71-83

Fairclough, N. (2003). 'Political Correctness': the politics of culture and language. *Discourse & Society*, 14 (1), 17-28

Gazdar, Gerald (1978) *Pragmatics: implicature, presupposition, and logical form*. New York: Academic Press

Gergen, K. (1999). *An invitation to social construction*. London: Sage

Gergen, K. (2000). Interview in *PMTH NEWS 11 May 2000*, available online http://www.california.com/~rathbone/pm051100.htm, accessed 6 June 2003

Hacking, I. (1999). *The social construction of what?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Hedgepeth, W. (1998). *The Hog Book (2nd edition, 1st edition 1978).* Athens: University of Georgia Press

Kadmon, Nirit (2000) *Formal Pragmatics: Semantics, Pragmatics, Presupposition, and Focus.* London: Blackwell

Lakoff, George (1993) 'The contemporary theory of metaphor.' In Andrew Ortony (ed), *Metaphor and Thought* (2nd edition), 202-251. Cambridge University Press

Lakoff, George and Johnson, Mark (1999) *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought.* New York: Basic Books

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson (1980) *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press

Leach, Edmund. (1964) 'Anthropological aspects of language: animal categories and verbal abuse.' In Eric Lenneberg (ed.) *New directions in the study of language*. Cambridge: MIT Press

Mills, S. (2003). Caught between sexism, anti-sexism and 'political correctness': feminist women's negations with naming practices. *Discourse & Society*, 14(1), 87-110

PIH (2002). *Pork Industry Handbook 2002 CD-ROM edition,* Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press

PIH (2003). *Pork Industry Handbook (information brochure L233)* available http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/exten/swine/L-223.PDF, accessed 22 May 2003

Political (2003). *Political correctness is stupid.* available http://blueeyedtex.com/politics/PoliticalCorrectness.htm accessed 20 June 2003

Singer, Peter (1990) *Animal Liberation (2ⁿᵈ edition, 1ˢᵗ edition 1975).* New York: New York
   Review

Stibbe, A. (2001). Language, power and the social construction of animals. *Society & Animals* 9(2),
   145-162

Valentine, James (1998) 'Naming the other: power, politeness and the inflation of euphemisms'
   Sociological Research Online vol 3 no 4, available
   http://www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/3/4/7.html, accessed 6/3/2002

Van Dijk, Teun (1993) 'Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis', *Discourse and Society*, 4(2):
249-283

Notes

[1] The CD-ROM version of the PIH was used for analysis. Numbers in references to the PIH refer to information sheet numbers (rather than page numbers), as these are the same for both the CD-ROM and print version.

[2] The term *metaphor* is used here and elsewhere in the paper in the sense of what Lakoff and Johnson (1980; 1999) and Lakoff (1993) call *conceptual metaphor.* According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999:45), 'the way we conceptualise [complex domains], reason about them, and visualise them, comes from other domains of experience…Conceptual metaphor is pervasive in both thought and language. It is hard not to think of a common subjective experience that is not conventionally conceptualised in metaphor.'