

#FREETOBE CUTE: An Introspective Look on Primate Representation and how New Media can Protect Primates from the Illegal Pet Trade

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16 March 2020



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis committee, professors, classmates, family, and close friends for all of their great support with this research journey. To my wonderful thesis committee – Dr. Herbert Covert, Dr. Jolene Fisher, and Dr. Douglas Bamforth – that made this research and writing possible, for always being available to answer questions, and guide me through this process, thank you. To my thesis classmates and professor, Dr. Alison Cool, thank you for all of the collective moral support and being a great resource of positivity; making Thursday mornings from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. one of my favorite times of the week. To my mother and deceased father, who always believed in my writing and support my passions, thank you. To my brothers who helped me find a grounded research idea and be there for me as well, thank you. To my mother's cats – Thomas, George, and Fiona – who are always willing to give me company when I return home, sitting on my lap while I write, or chewing on my notes – somehow saying they agree that they are better pets than a non-human primate. To my close friends and coworkers who had to deal with constant texts consisting of diatribes with social media posts supporting the pet trade at 2 a.m., thank you. To my roommates, Hannah and Erin, who helped me step away when things became hectic and focus on the greater goal and revitalize my passion for the subject material. To Corinne, who I worked for in the laboratory, and Izzy, my coworker, thank you for always listening to my ideas and helping me plan out what to focus my research on. I am so thankful for all of these amazing people (and cats) in my life who supported me every step of the way.

ABSTRACT

The trade of non-human primates as pets has become normalized on social media through saturation. Factors of this saturation include the passive support of posts by content viewers, a lack of conservation education, and the non-existence of a system to report these posts that participate in the trade. Data collected includes analyzing representations online that depict the anthropomorphizing and unsafe handling of primates as well as risky tourism actions such as selfies with primates through a screenshot and term analysis on social media platforms. The dissection of representation in traditional media through lingual and visual research to make meaning to stereotypes related to the support of non-human primate ownership, such as the cute trickster, was also conducted. On social media, Instagram and YouTube had more posts of pet primates than did Twitter and Reddit. Representations of non-human primates that are favorable to conservation efforts can be created in new media through social media hashtag campaigns and cooperation with brands, influencers, and non-profits.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
INTRODUCTION	7
RESEARCH QUESTION	8
BACKGROUND.....	10
<i>Background: Conservation</i>	12
<i>Background: Law</i>	13
<i>Background: Media</i>	14
HYPOTHESIS.....	16
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	17
CONCLUSION.....	21
CHAPTER 1:	
21ST CENTURY PRIMATES	24
GLOBAL LEGISLATURE	25
U.S. LEGISLATURE AND ENFORCEMENT	26
COMMUNICATION AND ORGANIZATION OF ENFORCEMENT	27
LAW ENFORCEMENT IN DEVELOPING NATIONS	28
THE FIVE FREEDOMS.....	29
TRAFFICKING AND POVERTY.....	30
TRADE AND CRIMINOLOGY	31
MARKET DEMAND	33
EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR CONSERVATION.....	34
ACCOUNTABILITY IN CONSERVATION.....	36
SHIPPED AND BRED.....	38
CONCLUSION.....	39

CHAPTER 2:

ART AND PRIMATES: PORTRAITURE AND CARICATURE IN LITERATURE AND FILM..... 41

A TEMPORAL APPROACH 42

Archaeology and Mythology: Europe and Africa..... 43

Archaeology and Mythology: The Americas and Colonialism..... 44

Archaeology and Mythology: Asia..... 45

LITERATURE, FILM, AND TELEVISION: *DATA COLLECTION*..... 46

LITERATURE, FILM, AND TELEVISION: *TERMINOLOGY*..... 47

LITERATURE, FILM, AND TELEVISION: *ANALYSIS*..... 49

MEDIA AND CRUELTY 54

CONCLUSION..... 55

CHAPTER 3:

THE PRIMATE INFLUENCER..... 57

SOCIAL MEDIA: THE SELF, THE POSTS, AND THE ALGORITHM..... 58

UNDERSTANDING PRIMATES THROUGH MEMES 60

ANIMAL ABUSE IN SOCIAL MEDIA CULTURE..... 62

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PRIMATE POPULARITY 63

DATA COLLECTION..... 64

Data Collection: Methodology and Theory..... 64

ANALYSIS..... 66

CONCLUSION..... 68

CHAPTER 4:

MAKING OF A PRIMATE PLATFORM..... 73

STATISTICS ON INTERNET USAGE..... 73

EDUCATION IN CONSERVATION 75

ACCOUNTABILITY 78

CAMPAIGNING FOR PRIMATES	82
CONCLUSION	87
CONCLUSION.....	88
APPENDIX.....	89
APPENDIX A: SEARCH TERMS USED.....	89
APPENDIX B: FIGURE 6	89
APPENDIX C: FIGURE 8	94
WORKS CITED.....	95

INTRODUCTION

Economic markets are everlasting once they influence social lives, as the notion of being purchased is imposed in the everyday. As socially constructed, the notion of being purchased is then forever tied to the product in its narrative space. With this concept of commodities in mind, current economic trends of the illegal pet trade of non-human primates can be seen as complex in its global socioeconomic and cultural associations. The wildlife trafficking of non-human primates is one of the top five global black markets (U.S. Wildlife Trafficking Alliance 2019) and one of the largest threats to extant primates next to deforestation (WWF 2019). The pet trade is under the umbrella of the wildlife trade which includes animals being used as bushmeat, ritual, and medicine (Sollund 2019). The trade of non-human primates is a messy market that may never be completely dismantled because there is a lack of centralization in the supply on the market (Gristwood 2019). When analyzing its' catalysts, it is important to recognize the disorganization of the trade as it lacks this central figurehead. It is the consumer who is to be considered the powerhouse of the illegal pet trade. While media has always mediated the knowledge of the trade, may it be between two people or a corporation and audience, in more recent western history media representation has been frequently used to inadvertently advertise for the ownership of non-human primates.

As social media becomes increasingly more accessible on a global scale, the trade can be easier to access through viewing images of anthropomorphized primates. Anthropomorphized primates can be seen through art, photographs of pets, and tourism selfies with primates (Lenzi, Speiran, and Grasso 2019). Artistic narratives of non-human primates, displaying them as cute tricksters, create stereotypes and portraiture that can encourage peoples' desires for ownership.

The stigmas of owning primates vary by culture from showcasing economic social status and preventing pests on farms, to consumer desire from seeing it saturate social media feeds.

I have personally experienced the desire of owning a pet primate through media. I have also felt it by viewing primates at zoos and having the illicit “aww” response. Growing up on traditional forms of mass media including *Curious George* made me think highly of primates – as extremely cute and fun – but to my family, owning cats was enough for companionship. Not every individual or group of individuals may have this view and would much rather purchase an exotic animal without knowing legal and conservation status. The trade is not dependent on imports only, as in regions where people coexist with non-human primates, they can purchase these species as well (BBC Indonesia 2019; Kazaba 2019; Reuter and Schaefer 2017).

Research Question

My research aims to repurpose the methods film media has used in the past that at times have displayed primates as pure, innocent companions to humans and use those methods as a way to educate the public on avoiding posts that may inadvertently advertise the primate pet market (Edes 2019). I argue that education through social media can interrupt the primate pet trade as social media has become increasingly accessible in developed nations, where there is a major source of demand as a means for entertainment (PEW Research Center 2019; Chaffey 2019). The use of hashtag campaigns, sponsorship of influencers and celebrities, and memes can generate positive educational impacts to prevent people from supporting the pet trade. With the vast cultural evolution of social media, younger generations may be targeted to these sponsorships more often than older ones but, inter-generational learning on conservation issues is a successful form of learning (Peterson, Stevenson, and Lawson 2019).

However, to understand the current ways media displays primates that advertise the pet trade needs to have some historical context behind it. The questions I address include:

How do traditional forms of mass media, including film and literature, portray primates compared to social media?

How does social media perpetuate the black-market pet trade of primates?

And finally, can social media be used to advocate for non-human primate conservation?

Media has historically influenced and mediated the way humans anthropomorphize primates, and through social media, these images are now readily available to the mass culture (Mkono and Holder 2019; Ross, Vreeman, and Lonsdorf 2011). Non-human primates have had a major impact on culture dating back to the archaeological record and historical media. For example, evidence of ownership can be seen in ancient Egyptian art, that depicts social prestige in owning a baboon, as they were revered for their intelligence (Groves, Mittermeier, and Richardson 2008). While new mass media may be familiarizing demographics to species they might not have known existed otherwise, the sharing of media containing primates has been noted to encourage the expansion of the illegal pet trade (Leighty et al. 2015; Edevane 2019).

Audiences can feel inclined to owning a primate because of their access to videos and photographs depicting primates as either being relaxed in their natural habitats or displaying charismatic human behaviors such as smiling, despite them being threat displays. Media can be defined as a means for mass communication and in current western consumer societies, it is seen as a means of forging cultural and self-identities (Kellner 1995). The forms of media I will be reviewing will be categorized with film, television, and entertainment-based social media. The

premise of this research is the review the representations of non-human primates as well as observe key moments that define how people view them today.

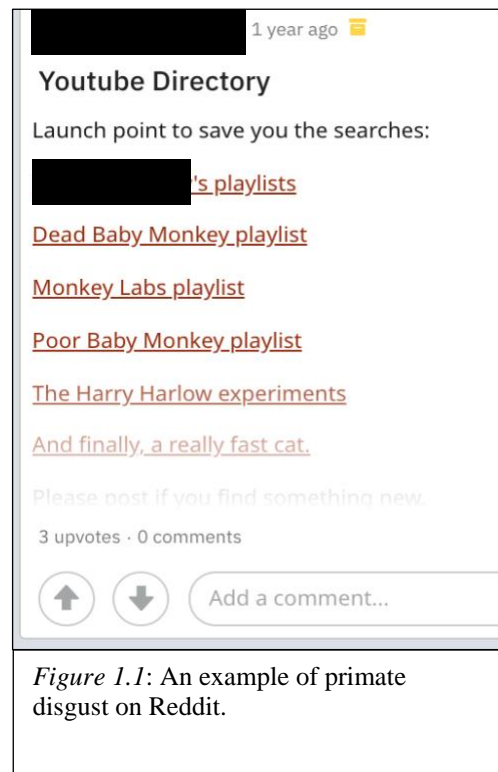
Background

Many human cultures have a longstanding curious connection to non-human primates seen in both religious ties and memorable entertainment tropes. People are being increasingly introduced to primates through invasive species, conservation and development projects, and accessibility to technology. All of these elements contradict one another regarding conservation efforts. The relationship of the human depicting the non-human primate narrative overtime stems from close evolutionary likeness (Abd Mutalib et al. 2017; Fawcett and Gullone 2001).

Historical admiration of anthropomorphizing chimpanzees in zoos has transformed into social media posts of macaques riding motorcycles. A darker history including racial depictions degrading both people of color and primate relatives persist today and flourish online. Online communities can be located consisting of people disgusted by primates on multiple online sites including Reddit and YouTube through the open web. I would hypothesize that more can be discovered on the “deep web”, as that is not as heavily monitored by government agencies and banks, however, that will not be a focus of this research. The bulk of media audiences that passively “like” posts of primates, regardless of their state, are on the open web. They either do not realize they are liking illegal actions or choose not to think about the realities of the situation.

New media allows for the audience to mediate what they wish to see through algorithmic tracking of their activity. This ultimately leads to increased sharing of the media, defining it as new. New media “enables people to circulate knowledge in new ways, to call forth new publics, to occupy new communicative roles, to engage in new forms of politics and control – in short, new social practices” (Gershon 2017, 15). The formation of new communities leads to new

media. Playlists can be found that consist solely of animal abuse towards non-human primates (fig. 1.1). The dichotomy of how humans view primates treads a fine line between the cute and the monstrous representations. The placement of these terms is based on a combination of media exposure, religious and political beliefs, and the phenomenon of the uncanny valley. The phenomenon of the uncanny valley is where humanoid-likeness of aesthetic, may it be in nature or media, triggers disgust and discomfort to the viewing party (Mori 1970). In the second chapter, these concepts of cute and monstrous by Scott 2007 will be used to categorize the ways that primates are represented in traditional media. For example, when analyzing the word trickster, often associated with deviance and primates in



mythology, the term can fall under the category of cute. The term cute originates from cunning, clever, and shrewd. While non-human primates are seen as sharp, like acute, they are also known as the trickster, which falls under the “cute category”, rather than the monstrous. This simple dichotomy can be broken down into individual connotations of terms that may have had alternate meanings through time, but the perceptions themselves are stoic in meaning.

The pet trade conversation has not been a focus in academic literature until recent years which has posed problems in conservation efforts. This holistic approach is important as the trade and its’ relationship to social media are imperative to examine in the current technological day and age. Some legal success stories include the reinstatement of the Captive Primate Safety Act, preventing the sale and imports of non-human primates across the United States (Fishman

2019). A study done on this topic had been performed in 2018 using the term “the cute industry” to explain the causes of the primate pet trade pervading social media feeds alongside a lack of education on conservation (Bockhaus 2018). The problems of social media impacts on non-human primate populations are on the sidelines of broader subjects of wildlife tourism and illegal trade of animals in research generally, indicating that this topic is still in its infancy and that the evolution of technology may have an impact on the lack of ground covered on this topic. In this research, I decided to examine these three topics: conservation, legislation, and media. This specific order represents different spheres of perspectives that funnel into one another.

Research on conservation, legal, and media status of primates since 2017 has focused on topics including ethnographic and technological approaches to conservation (Deb et al. 2018; Dore et al. 2018; Shanee 2019; Thạch et al. 2018); the ways in that tourism and developing nations should intervene on the market (Blair et al. 2017); and how to educate and represent primates online (Bockhaus 2018; Ni et al. 2018; Koenig, Koenig, and Sanz 2018).

Background: *Conservation*

Research on trafficking prevention has found that cooperation (Blair et al. 2017) and ethnographic research (Dore et al. 2018) are the keys to success between nonprofits, NGOs, and academics to benefit the public and victims. Understanding the identities of traffickers would help development programs with taking individuals out of these jobs and providing them with better work (Leberatto 2017). The concept of the pornography of poverty has created bias in dialogue when discussing conservation efforts from an outsider-cultural perspective. This concept victimizes the agency of local peoples to generate audience pathos in the hopes of leading to charitable donations, but the inundation of this media type can skew development efforts (Forje 1989). The regional terminology of primate species and how they translate online

also impacts the sales and local's knowledge of conservation (Thạch et al. 2018). Community-based conservation can arise out of educational programs that can empower developing regions socioeconomically. Poaching practices can then begin to be dismantled in these areas in exchange for conservation work (Shanee 2019). However, in this effort of empowering local peoples in these regions comes to responsibility of collective action and moral reflexivity to these actions from developed nations alongside preventing activist burn out in the global effort to dismantle the market.

Biological research has focused on how the transport of primates has a significant negative psychological impact on species such as the slow loris (Khudamrongsawat et al. 2018). Face recognition software has also been in the works to help conservationists and primatologists locate individual non-human primates both in the wild and on social media. This could be a valuable tool to tracking poaching trails (Deb et al. 2018). However, the pet trade is a global market and cultures are never homogenous, and so looking at the legal aspects of the trade alongside major conservation efforts is important to understanding how to liberate at-risk populations from the black market.

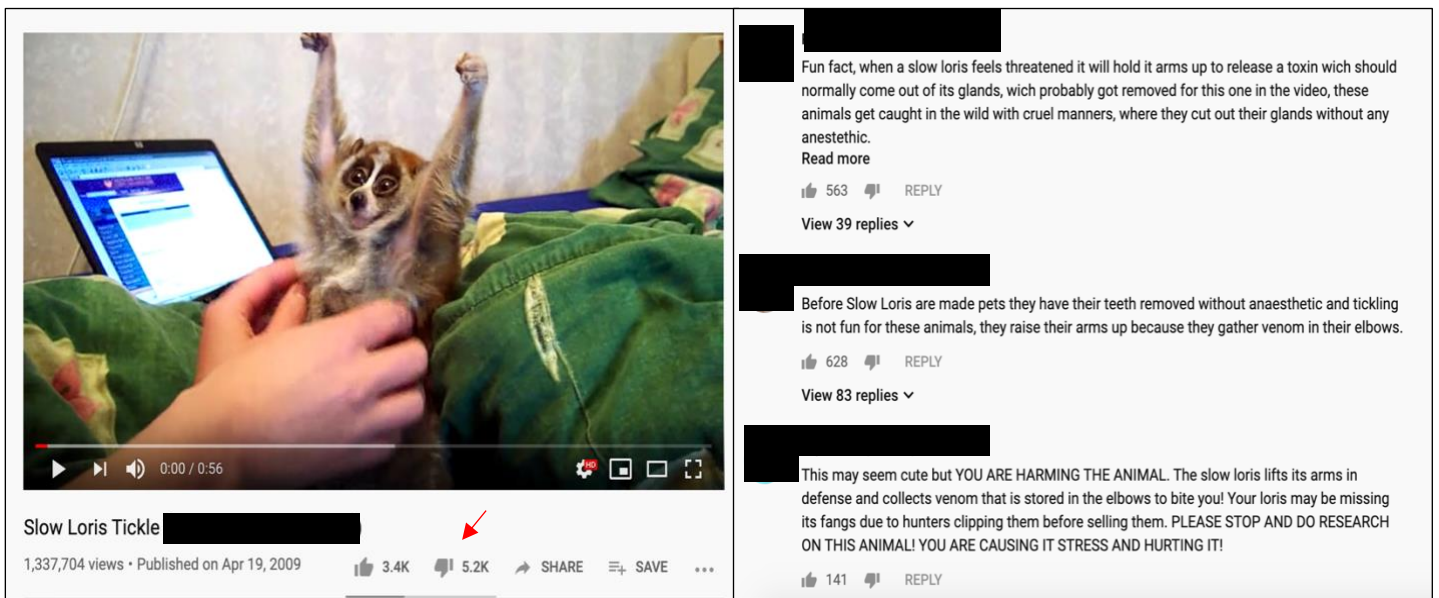
Background: Law

Despite the possibility of tracking down poaching trails on a global scale being sought out as a major asset to law enforcement (Jacobs and Baker 2018), the lack of penalties by local legislature is a major contributor to the ownership of non-human primates within their endemic regions (Blair et al. 2017; LaFleur et al. 2019; Reuter et al. 2019). Even with personal ownership of primates, especially with the exportation market, militia and human rights violations are deeply connected with the pet trade, regardless of the species being traded (Felbab-Brown 2018).

Tourism is often an industry many people who previously poached enter into when caught by law enforcement. But, poaching practices still enter the realm of tourism. When tourists enter new countries with a preconceived notion of what the nation is like, they may often fuel pet trade practices. Although economically beneficial, tourism may fuel this trade since its advertisements anthropomorphize species in their landscapes and can encourage exploitation of the environment.

Background: *Media*

The anthropomorphizing of species to portray them as cute can be described as an industry of its own on social media to advertise the pet trade (Bockhaus 2018). Facebook has been a recent case study on how the pet trade has been made easier to access. Through animal-related groups posting pictures of non-human primates in multiple scenarios, the purchase of primates becomes normalized (Siriwat, Nekaris, and Nijman 2019). The slow loris has been a continuous case study of this topic. Many people had desired to own a slow loris after viewing YouTube videos that have been circulating the internet since the early 2000s (Parent 2019). The



Fun fact, when a slow loris feels threatened it will hold it arms up to release a toxin wich should normally come out of its glands, wich probably got removed for this one in the video, these animals get caught in the wild with cruel manners, where they cut out their glands without any anesthetic.
Read more
563 REPLY
View 39 replies

Before Slow Loris are made pets they have their teeth removed without anaesthetic and tickling is not fun for these animals, they raise their arms up because they gather venom in their elbows.
628 REPLY
View 83 replies

This may seem cute but YOU ARE HARMING THE ANIMAL. The slow loris lifts its arms in defense and collects venom that is stored in the elbows to bite you! Your loris may be missing its fangs due to hunters clipping them before selling them. PLEASE STOP AND DO RESEARCH ON THIS ANIMAL! YOU ARE CAUSING IT STRESS AND HURTING IT!
141 REPLY

Slow Loris Tickle [redacted]
1,337,704 views · Published on Apr 19, 2009
3.4K 5.2K SHARE SAVE ...

Figure 1.2: The popular case study used for arguing that new media perpetuates the primate pet trade. Slow loris Tickle originally had positive viral responses back in 2009 but, with the expansion of social media in the past few years, viewers have become educated on slow loris behavior and the pet trade as seen in the like bar and comments.

continuous research on this case alongside increased education through social media has changed the way people view this video in particular (*fig. 1.2*).

Even professional wildlife photography has been argued to create the same reaction out of audiences as slow loris videos have in the past (Mutalib 2018). There are limited ways to report media depicting trafficked animals or promoting the pet trade on social media websites. An operation tracking down poachers online carried out by the Interpol displayed the importance of social media in law enforcement (Gristwood 2019). Being a global space for people to interact, there are varying views and attitudes of animals through the culture that are important ethnographic reports to examine when taking into consideration how to educate users on these sites (Waters et al. 2019). The use of entertainment-education can lead to socially desirable behaviors and practices online (Melkote and Steeves 2001). Overall, using visual media seems to be a successful route to educating regardless of social media or classroom use to reach those who may not have recreational access to zoos may learn about primate species (Koenig, Koenig, and Sanz 2018). Visual media has been used inadvertently to create stereotyped and portrait imagery of non-human primates since the archaeological record, and informational visuals can be used to combat these engrained schematics. It is important to cite that information media plays a huge role as well in informing the public on the illegal trade and can be a great source to use to understand public reactions to these legal cases (Ni et al. 2018).

Information media is a powerful tool for gathering audience reactions to stories as was seen in the case of Harambe and how it sparked interest in understanding the importance of a captive animals' death concerning conservation. Digital media has created a new space of the self, altering social worlds into social networks and studies in behavioral change need to reflect this (Pink 2011). Through clicktivism, a method of protest or social organization online through

post popularity, there has been increased attention on conservation issues (Mkono and Holder 2019). While I argue the importance for this practice, clicktivism is often critiqued as passive participation, but I see it as a component of new media.

Hypothesis

This research will examine these elements of conservation, law, and media altogether to understanding media research on the primate pet trade. To spread educational awareness of cultural stereotypes and how they permeate the trade, the use of imagery that depicts primates in undesirable habitats juxtaposed to wildlife environments could be beneficial to those uncomfortable with primates. This method would expand on how these species are complex, living creatures and would not feed too heavily into *pathos*. In turn, the educational awareness through social media entertainment would benefit academic circles by furthering the research of the pet trade in a new medium and explore new conservation techniques that could be valuable to many conservationists as social media usage increases. Images being shared through hashtag campaigns, if advocated by companies and NGOs alike to sponsor popular online influencers, would help show the issues at large to mass audiences.

Empowerment and cooperation are key to publicizing the primate trade, however, there could be issues of oversaturation in the sharing of posts which creates desensitization as well as lack of interest to organizations without incentives in return (Wright 2010; Moshier, Steadman, and Roberts 2019.; Gorski, Lopresti-Goodman, and Rising 2019). But, through social marketing entertainment-education could be successful as it gauges the audiences' activities rather than imposing on their daily views. Harold Lasswell's hypodermic media theory states that mass media's message is always accepted by its intended audience, as seen in propaganda (Lasswell 1938), but I argue that for education efforts to be received there needs to be behavioral change

research. Social marketing ultimately leads to behavioral changes of the audience, but it can be tricky with demographics that do not like non-human primates. Through the theory of reasoned action intentions are the determinant of performance and, if they are perceived properly there can be positive behavioral change leading to higher demographic participation (Melkote and Steeves 2001).

Data Collection and Analysis

The data for understanding how often viewers' feeds are saturated with illegal primates will be a mixture of qualitative and quantitative. Systematic methods with a heuristic approach were performed each Saturday from May through the end of July where screenshots were collected of the top and most recent posts on social media websites while on incognito mode. I used incognito mode to avoid some algorithm bias that could have impacted which posts I would see first. I did this because, as someone who is researching on the pet trade, I might have received ads, or posts might have been higher up on the feed, showing more pet primates than someone who does not use those key terms as often. The sites I collected data from included Reddit, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. The data were collected during the summer until July and once more through September to gauge how tourism impacts the amount of content uploaded that either (1) included a pet primate or (2) unsafe tourism activities such as taking a picture next to a non-human primate (*fig. 1.3*).

I predicted that posts may be more balanced out between travel selfies and pet content since school begins by September typically in the United States. The data is not exactly region-locked since social media post popularity currently is not either. I have found that data varies from social media sites greatly as well as sub-group terms used include key-terms, hashtags, and subreddits. I argue that my findings are not to be used as significant statistics but rather be a

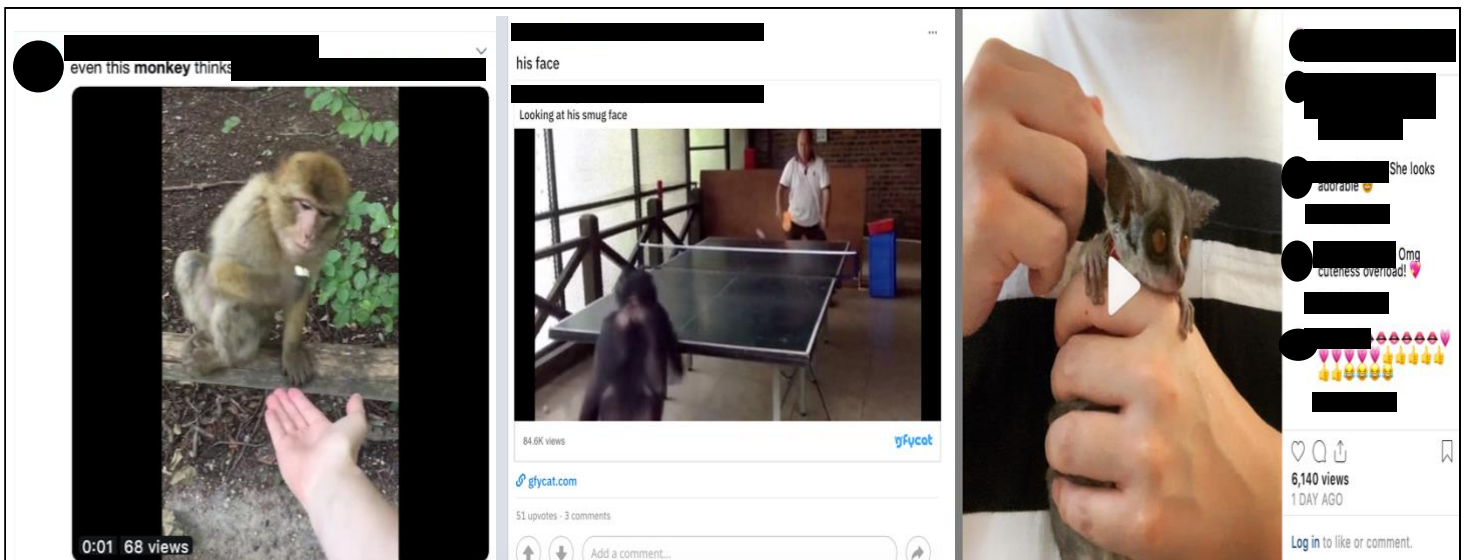


Figure 1.3: Screenshots from Twitter, Reddit, and Instagram all taken on July 27th showing the prevalence of risky behaviors with primates on social media such as poor tourism etiquette and the pet trade. All usernames and faces in screenshots in this thesis will be censored as well as any text in a language other than English to prevent the risk of endangering social media users.

model to use to actively track variations by the time of the year and social media networks. This model would help establish the framework of the severity in popularity in primates in a world growing close through communications technologies. It could even become an open-source database where the public can report seeing posts on a specific site and app locations as well as the timing of posts and if applicable, communities involved. From there, statistically significant data that spans longer than a single summer can be used as one of the ways to educate the public on these issues.

I then tallied up the number of times I saw illegal primate pets and risky wildlife tourism practices (e.g. selfies with primates) to see how likely it is for these images to pop up during the summer months as well as September when school is beginning to start and tourism slows (PEW Research Center 2019). This data set will not be excessively large since social media content is increasingly ephemeral, but I argue that the set of hashtags used, as well as tables that will be laid out in later sections of this writing, are good templates for further research to create a temporal archive of how primates have been viewed online inhumanely for understanding the cultural shifts in new media. Tables inserted in the thesis will have sections including the total

number of posts that contained a primate pet (determined by anthropomorphized settings or characteristics including clothing and food as well as captions), and risky wildlife tourism practices with primates (primate selfies or feeding primates). The tables will indicate if it was a popular post or new and there will be a table per media website. The total sum of times seeing these two practices that can influence the trade will then be quantitatively analyzed to create distributions to see how common these posts are during given times of the summer session and September (Leighty et al. 2015).

I chose to review social media websites in this manner based on grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Grounded theory methodology analyzes data for patterns and themes to spot social phenomena and has been used for analyzing how news media broadcasts animal cruelty (Grugan 2019). Grounded theory will be heavily used in my qualitative data portion. In this portion, that will be further visited in Chapter 2, I gathered multiple examples from traditional media; notably film, television, and literature, and analyzed how these media platforms conveyed primates. I used a linguistic approach to finding key-terms to use as categories I will be labeling these pieces of media under. Terms used to categorize film and literature were heavily influenced by Crist 1999, Scott 2007, and Pick 2011. Subjective analysis of primate actions in film and literature will be used to understand primates on social media through linguistic deductive methods.

These forms of media will mostly be used to give historical context as to how non-human primates have been viewed in the past. However, later films will be discussed as they have equal importance in primate identity in how they mirror, or lack thereof, social media images of primates. Film media will include television as well and will mostly be in the animated medium since the artistic freedoms depicting primates can heavily influence how humans categorize these

species. Some examples of films I will be analyzing include *Aladdin*, *Madagascar*, and *Princess Iron Fan*. I will still be mentioning live-action/CGI films too including *King Kong*, *Night at the Museum*, and *Planet of the Apes* for their depictions of primates, not just based on physicality, but personality archetypes as well. The literature will include an overview of how Shakespearean writing appropriated the terms associated with primates to become insulting (Kantha 2014). There is also a brief overview of various influences primates have had in mythology and religion and how some of those stereotypes including the trickster are still alive today (Cormier 2017).

While quantitative data will be used to observe patterns of primate media that have been popularized through social media, I will use the qualitative data sets I have calculated to understand thematic coding trends to further categorize what the public sees in media that consistently helps to determine viewers cultural schematic views of the world (Gibbs 2007). The goal of social media research was to see a shift in portraiture, stereotype, and archetype of primates from traditional media especially since these forms of media co-exist in time; one form of media is just more accessible.

The terms portraiture, stereotype, and archetype will be dissected in Chapter 2; however, I will be using these terms synonymously as non-human primates lack agency to contribute opinions on their portrayals and each artist and creator builds narrative discourse based on personal experience. The personal experience could be forming images based on any three of these labels as well as an audience's desire to view such imagery. The economic and social implications of how primates perform in literature, film, and social media are all key biases I will not fully cover in this project as it does not pertain close enough to the pet trade – however, I will be focusing on the portrayal itself that was chosen for many pieces of media and dissect the implications for conservation.

The site I reviewed the least was YouTube since upload times and changes in popularity trending tend to span from a week to two weeks. I found when I began my research and reviewed the site weekly, I continued to see the same videos. I did not analyze YouTube quantitatively since it was surprisingly static, however, screenshots will be discussed in greater length in Chapter 3. I will be using various hashtags and keywords depending on the prevalence of each site. These were determined by looking at popular posts' hashtag usage (*See Appendix A for more details*). For each site, they are slightly different including:

Twitter: cute monkeys, monkeys, primates

YouTube: cute monkeys, monkeys, primates, lemurs

Reddit: r/aww, r/monkeys

Instagram: animals, cute animals, monkey, monkeys, primates

I used the keyword lemurs on YouTube since I will be reviewing literature that mentions and/or examines the pet trade of lemurs and lorises (Clarke et al. 2019; Nekaris 2013). On Instagram, I added on animals and cute animals since it is a picture-based app and would have broader keywords as well in photographs of primates. I did not use keywords including ape or apes since a lot of the time an ape is mistaken for a monkey. Monkey is a term that tends to be the vernacular all-encompassing primates. This is another reason why I am looking broadly at the primate pet trade instead of the trade and conservation obstacles facing various species of primates specifically.

Conclusion

However, even though all of these elements of primate portrayals will be discussed, the core of my research was to find a way to use these elements to advocate for primate conservation efforts. Primate conservation can be advocated for through different forms of advertising and PR

campaigns by companies and institutions alike, however, social media by content creators is actively viewed more often than advertisements. Advertisements flood the system but the future of voice for these causes lies in sponsorship. YouTube, for example, lacks in AdSense, which is where advertisements playing on a creator's video generates their wealth.

Most social media platforms commonly used in the United States specifically are inflated with content creators, so this premise is not economically sound for companies. The platforms I will suggest targeting in later sections encompass ones I had used in my screenshot analyses as baseline data for larger projects. The way content creators on YouTube, who often span multiple other social media sites is through personalized sponsorship. Audiences prefer to hear about products from a trusted person because spending money should ideally not be synonymous with wasting money in the minds of consumers.

In Chapter 4 I urge pushing the “product” of primate conservation and prevention of supporting posts that highlight the illegal pet trade. Non-profit sponsorship of popular online content creators would be a more successful method than broad advertising. Active viewers would be the target as opposed to passive viewers. This demographic of active audiences can tune into creator content that begins with a few sentences on preventing the promotion of the primate pet trade. Advertisements that would catch the attention of viewers may also rely too heavily on pathos while a content creator would know the proper balance to grab an audience's attention.

This project will be encompassing conservation efforts, literary, film, and social media, and methods on educating the public on the issues of the primate pet trade. In the following chapter, I will go over the current legislation protecting primates, their conservation statuses, and poacher as well as a consumer culture. From there, a brief history of the relationship between

humans and non-human primates in media followed by the analysis of data and social media cases. I will end on exploring possible ways to educate the public on this pressing issue of the illegal trade of pet primates.

CHAPTER 1:

21st CENTURY PRIMATES

The use of primates in the past few decades by mass media indicates to audiences a sense of their conservation status from entertainment industries, however, this perception does not mirror reality. Audiences may want to mirror films that include a pet primate out of desirability of companionship and being a part of a film's influence on culture and status. The use of primate actors in mass media is not reflective of conservation, rather it is in response to new technology, specific to the computer-generated imagery (CGI) of animals. The wildlife trade market, including the pet trade, is currently the second-largest threat to primates (WWF 2019). Knowing the conservation status of primates is vital to understanding the popularity and urgency surrounding primates in various forms of current media. As of 2019, 27.8% of primates were considered endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List (IUCN). In just half a decade, between 2012 and 2016, 189 nations illegally exported 11,659,769 individuals of 1316 species of animals to developed nations (Can, D'Cruze, and Macdonald 2019). Besides these exports co-exists localized pet trades in underdeveloped nations where non-human primates are endemic. The decline of non-human primate populations is further perpetuated by laws not being created and/or enforced. There is also a lack of focus on the ethnographic aspects of the trade. This includes a lack of communication between multiple communities and NGOs who all have a wealth of information that could be used to educate the public on media that may be advertising the pet trade.

This chapter will go over the current state of primate conservation and some issues facing preservation. Issues detailed in this chapter include the current legislation and enforcement of illegal trade activities, and the communications between academia, NGOs, and the public. The

protection of wildlife in text has become well-established since 1900 when the first U.S. law protecting species against the wildlife trade was established – the Lacey Act. In 2019 the U.S. Senate added an amendment to the Lacey Act. The legislation ruled to reintroduce the Captive Primate Safety Act (CPSA) to “prohibit interstate commerce in nonhuman primates (...) for the exotic pet trade” (Fishman 2019). Yet, the addition to the law cannot predict how the fight against traffickers will be communicated in academic and public spheres in the future.

Legislation on the pet trade from other nations will be examined as well in this chapter related to cultural and political pressures that prevent the total elimination of trade practices.

Global Legislation

Plenty of laws protecting wildlife have been written since the 20th century as information of threats to the natural world has become more accessible. Since the 1900s there has been legislation actively passed in the United States from the state sector to federal acts. International protocols from the United Nations (UN) and Interpol have also been instated. Legislation being passed on this subject has seen a notable increase since the 1960s alongside development initiatives. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) was an international treaty on the protection of animals from wildlife trade that grew out of the IUCN. CITES has worked with Interpol on protocols in recent years to rescue victims of the pet trade through tracing buyer and seller transactions (Gristwood 2019). Species protected under CITES are selected based on their IUCN status (i.e.: endangered, critically endangered...) and the pressures and severity of the illegal trade in their endemic regions (Nuwer 2018). While some nations have agreed to sign the CITES treaty and engage in federal law enforcement to combat the trade, many trafficked species are invisible to security through various packaging methods in transit. On top of sneaking living cargo, the CITES treaty still does not protect enough species as

the illegal trade is constantly expanding with social media networking and the lack of law enforcement from many nations where species are exported (Nuwer 2018; Refisch et al. 2018). Apart from exports, a recently exposed threat often silent in the literature is the rise of domestic purchasing of wild species as pets. As nations become globalized, new markets expand. Even if poverty remains in productive regions – cultures clash and the ideals of status symbols and utility transform, including purchasing patterns in the illegal pet market regardless of what levels of legalities are enforced (Aloysius et al. 2019). With increased ethnographic research about the pet trade, more can be understood on why supposedly protected species are still being sold and how law enforcement can be improved with on-ground operations. Even when the law is written, the pet trade promises a type of wealth or investment to the people evidentially creating actors in the market; however, the reasons to actively join are more complex than monetary reasons alone.

U.S. Legislature and Enforcement

The legislature that is the cornerstone to U.S law enforcement is the Lacey Act. The Lacey Act was the first federal law (1900) to prohibit the trade of wildlife going in and out of the country, including civil and criminal penalties (“Lacey Act” 1900). However, when it comes to specific species ownership there has been a major gray area legally in the United States until 2019. The United States has high rates of social media usage so, having pet ownership laws vary by state can increase the risk of someone illegally owning an endangered species. The United States and Northern Europe are the top users of social media with 95% of the population participating in it (Chaffey 2019). Even though many exotics are protected under the Lacey Act and the CPSA amendment, states allowing permits for endangered species not only impacts their conservation status but raises the risk of introducing invasive species (Roth 2019). With the expansion of the internet, there has been the creation of websites including *Findlaw* where

someone interested in buying exotics can observe what their state requires. However, with social media posts inundating imagery of non-human pet primates, and some of these posts including advertisements from captive breeders who are possible buyers from poachers, viewers may find it easier to purchase right away with a single click. The current culture of many developed nations endorses consumerism through these media outlets and having saturated feeds allows for a larger, impulsive, market (Wallerstein 1974).

While people may not want to research laws before buying a non-human primate, the vast majority of states still allows ownership of specific primates with a permit and age limit of the animal. Florida, for example, allows for people to own any species of howler monkeys with a permit. but owning a chimpanzee is illegal (“Summary of State Laws Relating to Private Possession of Exotic Animals” n.d.). When it comes to the possibility that enforcement may find out about ownership, most people are unaware that seizing the animal is completely legal without fines, however, they will still be questioned by police mostly to figure out who the seller was. Going to local shelter offices to seize, or give up, non-human primates are more acceptable in the U.S. law than finding these species in a bust. Non-human primates are more often than not donated to zoos afterward (“City and County of Denver” n.d.).

Communication and Organization of Enforcement

Outside of the U.S., one popular illegal pet in the non-human primate industry is the slow loris. In Japan, lorises are in high demand. A 2014 report revealed that 20 pet shops in Japan were selling 74 individuals. The same analysis found 93 videos that were posted had 114 individual lorises that were identified to be threatened species. These primates were brought into the borders with illegitimate, forged, CITES permits (Musing, Suzuki, and Nekaris 2015).

In the Middle East, apes including gibbons and chimpanzees are often purchased and publicized online as laws protecting animals against the wildlife trade are rare in this region (fig. 2.1). The United Arab Emirates became the first nation in this region to protect animals from the pet trade, including primates, in their Federal Law no. 22 (2016).

Often times in South American nations including Peru, primates are traded domestically for bushmeat and pet ownership. Pet owners tend to be the most common traffickers in Peru (Shanee 2019). There is no kingpin in this industry and so the cultural implications behind why people traffic animals, specifically non-human primates, is more of a web than an innate system that has been becoming increasingly entangled as new means of technology have amplified the trade's performance abilities (Worall 2018).

Law Enforcement in Developing Nations

In many developing nations including Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of Congo, the local pet trade is on the rise. In Madagascar, the major reason lemurs are kept by

humans are as pets with tourism and business icons being a close second. The reasons behind the ownership are not merely for social status or fallback foods when famine hits the island, but rather, desirability in having a pet lemur as well as being able to make money off of these



Figure 2.1: A post from a Twitter account that often posts videos of varying subjects. This video frame shows a Gibbon in an orange shirt playing with a goat. The response shown below the video was one of the many comments mentioning a desire to own one of the animals in the video as a pet. The commenter mentions the Middle East because the beginning of the video had a watermark in Arabic.

animals (Reuter and Schaefer 2017). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, people who own farmland have no legal reparations for when wildlife destroys their crops. In a mostly rural culture where the law aims to protect wildlife for tourism, there is a major strain on the relationships between humans and their surrounding landscapes. One study by Kazaba (2019) found through ethnographic research that residents of the Democratic Republic of Congo will acquire ownership of primates they consider “pests” to prevent their crops from being consumed and destroyed. Households will capture these species with their traps and legislation on these activities and ownership is not enforced. The ownership of primates may be beneficial to Congolese farmers, but they are still disrupting and anthropomorphizing natural habitats (Kazaba 2019).

The Five Freedoms

While the primate pet trade may be domestically advertised for utilitarian values, one case study in England and Wales showed that non-human primates are intrinsically unsuitable to keep in households regardless of perceived care for them by humans therefore violating anti-abuse laws and regulations in the nation (Soulsbury et al. 2009).

The trade and ownership of primates violate the five freedoms of ethical living situations: “(1) freedom from hunger, thirst, and malnutrition; (2) freedom from disease and injury; (3) freedom from physical forms of thermal discomfort; (4) freedom from fear, distress, and negative psychological states; and (5) freedom to carry out normal behaviors” (Edes 2019; Soulsbury et al. 2009; Sneddon et al. 2016).

In households across the globe, owners without formal education in primatology and animal behavior are more likely to carry out abuses against these five freedoms, even with the knowledge of them. Primates have specific diets in their native ecological niches based on

evolutionary competition in mainly tropical and temperate zones of the earth where feeding is specialized (Altizer et al. 2006). Disease is another facet that can easily harm non-human primates as the close evolutionary relationship heightens the risk of pathogens spreading. Many herpes viruses, while relatively harmless to humans, can result in near-instant illness and fatalities in many primates including marmosets and galagos (Can, D’Cruze, and Macdonald 2019). Thermal discomfort is another common freedom broken, especially in tourism sites,

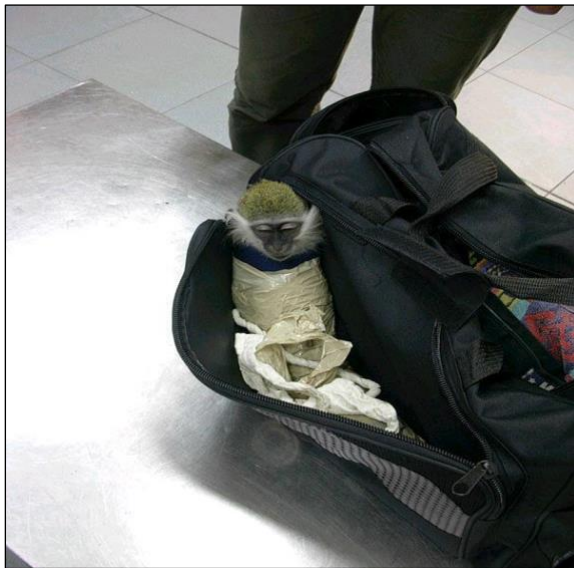


Figure 2.2: An example of how primates are often smuggled for the pet trade. Image courtesy of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) bust from an airport security check from United Arab Emirates, the first country in the Middle East to have legislature protecting primates from the illegal pet trade.

where nocturnal primates are forced to be active during the daytime which stresses metabolic processes and strains their eyes. The freedom is also breached in the transport of these species across borders, packed in a manner to hide them from government agencies (*Fig. 2.2*). These neglectful actions lead to negative psychological and physiological effects (Khudamrongsawat et al. 2018). All of those five freedoms being abused and ignored result in the inability to carry out normal behaviors. This ownership of non-human

primates is not compatible with human behavior, even if they are owned just to prevent destruction of property or to earn money.

Trafficking and Poverty

Just as the ownership of illegal pets has complex cultural implications depending on inhabited regions, the practices of capturing and poaching of non-human primates vary. Being an unorganized system that has a differing distribution between middle-people and poachers

compared to other major illegal trades, the illegal pet trade has adapted geographic trends with poaching practices. Tension and corruption between national law and citizens leads to an unorganized black market with the non-human primate pet trade. Many countries where primates are endemic face differing levels of poverty (Sachs, Mellinger, and Gallup 2001). When protecting primates, the regulation of the pet trade falls into the cracks of their endemic nations due to these socioeconomic implications related to law. Giving fines and jailing those caught poaching, capturing, or smuggling primates often faces limited enforcement and charges are often dropped unless an international corporation manages to find these major players of transport. There is also the issue of people's agency when receiving aid from developed nations, may it be legal, social, or economic aid. The victimization of people causes a relationship where developed nations and those they communicate with, government officials, maintain superiority over the people in aid projects (Forje 1989).

Trade and Criminology

Local communities that include individuals who participate in this trade often legitimize these actions. The market is not dealt with from a local scale out of the economic and cultural restraints, however trafficking wildlife tends to have more severe costs than poaching, the other wildlife trade, which tends to receive more media attention. The two cultures of wildlife trade are diverse (militant poaching and unorganized smuggling), and this distinction is imperative to make when approaching studying these issues (Actman 2019). Analyzing wildlife criminology addresses the five freedoms as well as the CRAVED model. The CRAVED model was created by Ronald V. Clarke in Britain's Police Force Research Unit (1999). CRAVED stands for concealable, removable, available, valuable, enjoyable, and disposable. The model is used for understanding the accessibility and abundance of animals being trafficked and why the crime is

being conducted (Lynch, Pires, and Pires 2019). When approaching the crimes from an ethnographic viewpoint it is vital to dispose of stereotyped myths of who poachers are to avoid narrow tracking of sellers.

Knowledge on aiding communities in endemic non-human primate regions is vital since education on the trade should focus on economic rebranding and revitalization on these groups that may rely on the trade for their socioeconomic stability. The myths of the primate trade being organized and being a “local “folk” crime” ignores the complexities of the web of the international market (Leberatto 2017, 1354). A systematic review of the trade is vital for empowering local communities while bringing justice to non-human primates. There have historically been three groups that define poaching research: “(1) drivers of the deviance, (2) profiling perpetrators, and (3) categorizing the crime” (Essen et al. 2014). However, the categorization of a global market into these three broad groups disadvantages research and ignores the complexity of the law and cultures in these areas. Holistic views of villages and groups are vital to conservation sciences since on-ground research, understanding legislative pressures, and development projects are what will be the more innovative methods of preventing the propagation of the pet trade (Svensson et al. 2016). Financial gain is the bottom line for many groups of traffickers, yet financial incentives for the development of these nations can further unite citizens and benefit non-human primates (Rytterstedt 2016). If citizens in developed nations can now purchase a primate through social media, citizens in under-developed regions can also be empowered to protect these species as well by building up capital in other economic markets.

Not to say that systematic analysis of the trade is not useful, as systematic viewing can be highly beneficial for any conservation research to understanding drivers of the disintegration of

wildlife. However, when looking at ethnographic factors a holistic understanding rather than three key points is the direction research needs to go. Understanding the utilitarian value of the trade or categorizing the crime becomes a rabbit hole when looking at a multitude of cultures. Broadly, the pet trade is still a major category alongside other local ownership including the exploitation of non-human primates as photography props for tourists. Systematic analysis should look at the species level especially since the miscommunication of nomenclature leads to many primates being trafficked (Blair et al. 2017). While the theory is valuable to understanding cultural reasons behind the trade, a theory-neutral methodology can “facilitate exploration of variables derived from different disciplines” (2017, 2).

Market Demand

Economics are valuable for understanding the culture between buyers and sellers. This discipline is needed for understanding the impact on status culture and growth in seller regions. This market is becoming more bloated as social networking connects sellers and buyers in the technological age but can be sliced through advocacy and non-profit work educating buyers on the trade. The lack of law enforcement also heavily determines which non-human primates are being sold as pets as well. In my screenshot analyses (see Chapter 3), I noted that primates most often in television and film media were sold as pets and the accessibility of these primates was due to corrupt government and biological knowledge on them. Capuchins are the most popular monkey and chimpanzees were the most popular ape. A closer look at a nation where capuchins are endemic, Peru, has helped further grow our understanding of the ethnographic aspects of the trade.

Aside from capuchins, Peru’s primate diversity is one of the richest compared to any other nation making the pet trade a large threat. The lack of government staff, infrastructure,

reporting resources, and protocol account for heavy trade operations in the nation. Even though export rates are high in Peru, one 72-week study found that 5% of primates died while at the market and a total of 77.9% weekly turnover of individuals. The open markets are not under strict government regulation and tourism was found to be the largest benefactor to keeping this trade open. The corruption in government and lack of organization has led to illegal trade rates “comparable to levels of trade prior to the 1973 ban on primates’ exportation” (Shanee, Mendoza, and Shanee 2017, 1). The primate traders of Peru tend to be citizens in poverty looking for informal, opportunistic pay (Leberatto 2017). The trade is also closely interconnected between Peru and neighboring countries including Colombia and Brazil making enforcement harder to engage in (Svensson et al. 2016). Based on complaints, online sales are still the smallest portion of the pet trade in Peru, at 6% but data from August 2010 to July 2012 found 14 markets on ground selling 4,063 individual primates, showing a major amount of primates are still being abducted from their natural habitats and that 6% still being dangerous considering the increasing pet trade trends (Shanee, Mendoza, and Shanee 2017). A campaign called “Denunciafauna campaign” launched by Shanee et al. is where complaint data on wildlife trafficking came from. The campaign had 79 primate-related complaints at the time of the article being published (2017). Campaigns are often successful strategies for preventing the primate pet trade.

Education and Communication for Conservation

In Java, Indonesia the Fireface Project by Nekarlis (2016) implemented programs in education and local empowerment to teach communities on the island about lorises and the importance of protecting these species on the ground. Historically on Java, law enforcement never raided markets since “only lorises [were] there” (Nekarlis 2016). The lack of care for

lorises came from how the vast majority of citizens did not know what lorises looked like. After the launch of the campaign, local knowledge skyrocketed, and the importance of these non-human primates became known in the community. Another ongoing wildlife protection group is the Education for Nature – Vietnam (ENV). They launch campaigns for multiple species and enlist celebrity spokespeople to advocate for animals and against wildlife trade. Campaigns for the betterment of non-human primates often circulate education, especially among younger populations. Posters and calendars distributed and sold in schools and towns are effective measures of educating people on the primate pet trade.

While the rise of campaign initiatives has been beneficial to local communities in regions of endemic primates, another issue exacerbating the trade is the lack of communication between various NGOs and government levels and groups. The lack of education in many developing nations can be accounted for lack of funding by governments and schooling but NGOs, non-profits, and development agencies stationed in these areas are also keeping information to themselves to outcompete one another and ensure funding (Vance-Borland and Holley 2011). If these groups were encouraged to communicate with one another and work together, and not lose government funding for doing so, then there would be more progress in these regions in changing economic processes (Sandow and Allen 2005). When evaluating communication trends, NGOs are most central in the roles of communication and hold the most power but have the least diverse methods in commuting. They usually commute amongst other NGOs and hold a thought monopoly over information on regions over other stakeholders including academic circles and government organizations. Even though NGOs are most central to the operation, these other circles are just as important to operations despite being in the periphery, but the information needs to be de-monopolized to benefit all players in the pet trade (Moshier,

Steadman, and Roberts 2019). Even though on-ground operations are vital to dismembering buyers of the pet trade and transforming economic systems, there still needs to be work in developed nations to educating on pet ownership laws (Kazaba 2019). Many regions across the globe have a lack of knowledge on laws of pet ownership for multiple variables as previously mentioned including lack of communication in species names, and this unawareness encourages the pet trade all around.

Accountability in Conservation

So, who is accountable for educating populations and their interactions with the primate pet trade? Accountability is an age-old debate in many disciplines and can often lead to a muddled dialogue distracting from the issues at large. While many organizations are performing on-ground operations towards preventing the trade including NGOs, government law, and non-profit campaigns, the cross-border exports of wildlife often lead to legal grey areas unless laws are written explicitly to banning the trade (Kurland 2016). CITES treaty signers and many UN members may have laws barring the import and/or export of primates but when other nations do not the need for more efficient in-border protocol would be valuable. Accountability can be referred to as “a relational concept whereby some actors have the right to hold others to a set of standards, to judge whether they have filled their responsibilities in light of those standards, and to impose sanctions if they determine that those responsibilities have not been met” (Park and Kramarz 2019, 38).

However, when looking at a global, inter-cultural market judgment and imposing sanctions blinds people to the web of complexities behind why the pet trade is existent. A universal set of laws for protecting animals broadly would not be successful due to multiple cultural views of species and enforcing structured systems from one culture to another can be

seen as policing cultures. Imposing laws of other nations based on knowledge from western science on conservation can lead to disagreement and still does not stop the black-market system unless legislation can affordably be enforced in developing and developed nations alike. I argue that enforcing legislation in developing nations is costly and for any nation pooling resources into a trade as active as, broadly, wildlife trade is impractical when juxtaposed to other trades that impact humans directly. Instead of one universal set of laws for accountability, research needs to be done on the viability of treaties being signed voluntarily by nations that may focus more on education and economic development methods that would prevent the wildlife and pet trades success instead of simply barring it without considering cultural consequences. This concept can be taken online as well with social media corporations when understanding user accountability in sharing posts. Development projects are still highly beneficial for fostering community growth and conservation efforts. Programs for development and aid need to cooperate and a treaty among them to collaborate would be beneficial as well and with development projects comes new work in government that has room for these pre-made laws to be enforced finally. Enforcing laws from other nations is not ideal as it usually doesn't fit the culture of other countries but allowing education and pre-made laws to flourish through these development programs and dialogue between people and program can lead to more success in the longevity of outcomes (Kemmerer 2012).

There has been some discourse on using legislature for conservation in international efforts, but it's mostly on the groups themselves participating in development and preservation works. Cretois et al. (2019, 1) identified "a cluster incorporating almost all post-Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) legislation from around the world" (2019, 1) to be the most successful form of conservation efforts by the legislature. The group was the only one in the

analysis to be identified to use ecological and anthropocentric holistically. The authors describe this methodology used by post-CBD regulations as a “compromise between the interests of society and wildlife” (2019, 1). CBD does not rely on laws but rather on administrative regulations and has shown considerable success. International law may be a grey area of discussion currently concerning the pet trade, but national laws in protecting primates can help steer people away from buying primates if educated properly.

Shipped and Bred

The question of captive breeding is another area relatively unexplored, however, when mishandled can lead to possible invasive species. In the case of a failed petting zoo operation in Florida, macaques and vervets have been introduced into the landscape (Anderson, Hostetler, and Johnson 2017). This example of mishandling was negative for the environment, but these stories can also be a method of education to the public through news media. Captive breeders may often post images online as well to advertise their businesses. Differences in the state, national, and international laws can add to the legal grey area to this market. While the CSPA has been re-instated, the state laws on permits and captive breeding keep some forms of primate ownership legal. Aside from these pseudo-legalities, illegal actions are still going to be carried out if the consumer has a strong desire for a pet primate and media can advertise these wishes. The methods in obtaining these species as well are often not publicized, even if the seller has a permit. Regulation needs to be emphasized in the law and convention treaties for the betterment of non-human primates to prevent them from being in the circle of pet trade regardless of them being illegally trafficked or captive-bred. More research on how to decipher if a primate was captive-bred or illegally poached needs to be done as well since advertisements are not always what they seem on social media.

Conclusion

Advertising of the pet trade is heavily perpetuated through social media by showing any picture of a primate – anthropomorphized, as a pet, or a tourism prop in selfies, etc. – but film and television media have also been a large asset to encouraging the trade (Leighty et al. 2015). While animals used in these forms of media are not directly protected under federal law, the Animal Welfare Act’s section on exhibition states the protection of animals used on exhibit for humane care. The Endangered Species Act also protects these species and lists similar statements for humane care and ethical treatment (Rizzo 2012). The American Humane Association, established in 1940, has more specific guidelines for the protection of animal actors in film and television. Wildlife being used in Hollywood film became common around the 1940s, but before then, domestic animal actors including Rin-Tin-Tin the dog were icons for Hollywood in the 1920s (Morrow, Jameson, and Trinidad 2017). For primates specifically, the major guidelines highlighted in the American Humane Association guidelines book include (1) training, (2) hours of rest, (3) safety, (4) housing and general care, (5) zoonotic disease risk, and (6) enrichment/psychological wellbeing (American Humane Association 2015). The book separates monkeys, apes, and strepsirrhines into individual sections to highlight specific protections to ensure humane practices, however, the humane association must be contacted by producers in films they do not contact film producers. But, if a film producer is caught harming animals on their set it will result in major fines and some cases, imprisonment. All statutes highlighted in the guidebook are noted to be federal or state regulations as well.

While there are regulations in film and television media for animal actors, they are being used less often now with technological advances in animation. Nonetheless, images on the screen alongside certain narrative devices still invokes audience responses of wanting a pet primate of

their own. Even if the images on the screen are computer-generated, cute-aggressive responses can trigger desire, and with increased accessibility of purchasing power with social media, purchasing a primate is easier than ever (Aragón et al. 2015). These images are shared alongside photos taken by adventuring tourists or owners of trafficked non-human primates, and there is no system of reporting yet accessible on most social media websites despite the federal law being against this behavior in the United States. This history of relations of non-human primates with us in media has created stereotypes and caricatures that are still around today and heavily impact viewers' conservation knowledge and efforts.

CHAPTER 2:

ART AND PRIMATES: PORTRAITURE AND CARICATURE IN LITERATURE AND FILM

Influential media representation of non-human primates dates back to archaeological sites and mythological texts. In an increasingly globalized world, sites including temples are beginning to transform into bifurcated spaces of religion and tourism. The transformation is based on curiosity sparked by popular media interpretations of these spaces. The presence of non-human primates in Indian temples will be of more focus in Chapter 3, as they have become popular selfie-sites for problematizing wildlife tourism and ignoring cultural tourism (Medhi et al. 2007). Whether it is social media or other forms of entertainment that encourages people to travel to primate hotspots is heavily determined by both temporal and cultural aspects of when and where media has been an influence on individual and collective life. The many amalgamations of media may be considered cultural mirrors in understanding temporal interactions between humans and non-human primates (Kellner 1995).

Entertainment media could be considered perpetual to culture, but it is ever-changing between individuals and the “mainstream” beliefs at any given moment in time. The desires created by media are also confined by technology and the relationship between the audience and the creator (Thorburn 1987). In the current free market, media has become increasingly self-entrepreneurial in the social networking sphere and surplus is maintained by large amounts of non-memorable media being posted. Traditional forms of media including film and television are maintained in popular culture by their memorability through narrative and technological experimentation while relying on the consumer. Regardless of the temporality of media, caricature and portraiture co-exist through the literary device and the cultural evolution of collective thoughts. Caricature and portraiture for this analysis mirror the identities of negative

and positive media formed based on a cultural schema. The evolution of the media representations of non-human primates is heavily tied to historical social normativism from the mythological practice of understanding the earth through mysticism, western thought in colonialism, and consumerism based on cute advertising and evolutionary relationships.

Through visual and literary research I will be comparing the seven themes of animal abuse narrative from news media formulated by Grugan (2019) to some of the media to understand how human views of nature may be negative and driving the proliferation of the pet trade. The roles of subjectivity and objectivity will be analyzed and used to categorize media to paint a clearer, broader image of how collective media holistically creates portrayals of primates throughout time. Alongside using Strauss' grounded theory (1997) to delineate bio-social conceptions of primate relations, this chapter will undergo a temporal overview of media portrayals of non-human primates from archaeological and mythological depictions to literature and film up through the 21st century.

A Temporal Approach

Archaeological and mythological accounts of non-human primates are important to review as a means of understanding baseline archetypes that have proliferated throughout the written history before categorizing other traditional forms of media sampled. The traditional forms of media I will be sampling are from various points in time and their developed narratives have direct influence from surrounding environments. For instance, when did the prominent media trope of the trickster arise? Was this trope based on complications between humans and non-human primates, or, perhaps trickster is a term that has always been meant as a compliment – a sign of intelligence? Has this term then, if framed as positive, transcend into the realm of social media as a key phrase for advertising the primate pet trade, or been a deterring feature of

primates that prevents ownerships? To best understand these discourses, I will be tracking various myths and products of the archaeological record to see how long some of these tropes have been present.

Archaeology and Mythology: *Europe and Africa*

During the Bronze Age (300-1200 BC) throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa there was vast symbolism depicting primates. Frescos from the Minoan culture in the Aegean region depict thieving blue monkeys stealing eggs from a bird's nest (1600 BC). These blue monkeys arrived in the region from Egyptian trade. Egyptian archaeology consists of the bulk of archaeological evidence of primates concerning the human realm and culture. Baboons were prominent figures in Egyptian culture and mythology – depicted riding chariots with Ra as they howled to raise the sun, as well as being found leashed and/or mummified in the necropolises in Hermopolis. Pliny would hypothesize that the grey langur was a race of human, the differentiation found in the physique, but not in the sphere of intelligence. Just north of Africa, Greek mythology permeated a race of people based on primates as well. Dubbed Kerkepes, or “tailed people”, Zeus transformed them into monkeys as they loved to play tricks on people, but the myth refers to them as monkeys all along (Groves 2008). Frescos and the tales of Kerkepes are some of the earliest depictions of the trickster in the region of southern Europe and North Africa.

In Madagascar, prehistoric accounts of spirituality consisted mainly of ambiguous spirits that walked among the earth – which can be best described as various animal species on the biodiverse island. Some of these beliefs are still relevant today, such as the indri lemur being depicted as a guide and protector, and the aye-aye as a bearer of death (Crossland 2014). Throughout the continent, however, many European accounts from exploration and colonialization conveyed fear of primates, specifically the Great Apes. While not necessarily

analogous to narratives of indigenous cultures of the region, European explorer narratives would regard chimpanzees and gorillas as “monsters” (Groves 2008, 63–65). Some local tribes including the Ngumbi in present-day Equatorial Guinea praised gorillas despite hunting them for meat, referring to them as “man-like apes” rather than monsters (Groves 2008, 145). However, this term could and has been twisted by many other cultural groups to discuss man as inherently monstrous. Non-apes including marmosets from the New World would be kept as pets and fashion statements, traded by Portuguese explorers from Brazil to mainland Europe (Groves 2008).

Archaeology and Mythology: The Americas and Colonialism

During exploration, the interest in New World monkeys created a dialogue between Europeans and Indigenous groups in Latin America. The earliest interaction in modern-day Venezuela quickly became economic out of aesthetic appreciation of these “new” primates. This created a new space for the elite in the primate pet trade. Primates were being “quickly acquired the status of pets in the courts of European nobles, thus becoming among the most sought-after exotic animals in Early Modern European high society” (Veracini and Teixeira 2017). Primates began to enter the spaces of art and ownership in sixteenth-century Europe as both a query of humanity and the unknown. Primate ownership had been popular among various areas in the pre-contact Americas including modern-day Brazil, Peru, and Venezuela. Marmosets, capuchins, and howler monkeys were popular choices and to-date, indigenous tribes in areas including Colombia keep infant primates as pets, usually after successfully hunting their mothers (Veracini and Teixeira 2017).

Despite this on-going culture of pet ownership, many taboos persist among tribes in South America. These taboos include avoidance of consumption based on specific ages or

genders of primates. In the Sirionó community in Bolivia only older adults can consume owl monkeys while children are forbidden from it. The Sirionó also have creation myths of the howler monkey having a throat sac as punishment for their jealousy and bad behavior, being choked by the Moon until they grew an enlarged hyoid bone (Cormier 2006). Often, when narratives consist of this trickster role in New World spirituality and mythology, “the monkey has a trickster role, with the jaguar often being the foil” (Cormier 2006, 23). Some tribes, such as the Bororo of Brazil, believe a howler monkey deity created modern humans and the forest, thus referring to specific species as heroes rather than deviant in behavior (Wilbert and Simoneau 1983). However, these mythologies from the New World have not penetrated today’s modern culture as heavily as Asian mythologies have.

Archaeology and Mythology: Asia

One of the more prominent primate deities in popular culture today reigns from India. Hanuman, the grey langur whose temple is one of the popular tourists and religious spots of Hindi religious culture (Medhi 2007). Hanuman is revered in Hinduism as a hero for saving the princess from the demon king in the Sanskrit epic Ramayana (Doniger 2019). In China, the zodiac including the “clever monkey” was formed in the Han Dynasty (5 BC), but since has evolved in meaning as it has culturally diffused across the globe later on in history. In discourse on the creation of the monkey zodiac, the primate was one of the twelve animals that responded to the Buddha’s invitation into his kingdom becoming part of the zodiac year-cycle in return, as an elevated status in Chinese culture. Unlike many other zodiac species who are seen as loyal to, or looking upon humans such as the dog, the monkey metaphor has been seen as “active” and a “clever animal but it lacks persistence and perseverance” (Xu and Sharifian 2018, 598).

Even though the monkey was seen as a trickster in this sense and has been across the globe portrayed in similar ways adapted from zodiac beliefs, the epic from 1592, *Journey to the West* (Cheng'en), twisted the term trickster into a negative connotation of the monstrous which I will further examine within literary discussions of primate portrayals. This story is deeply engrained in Chinese media culture and inspired the first full-length animated film to come out of the China: *Princess Iron Fan* (1941) which debuted shortly after the first full-length animation in world history, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). With less of a budget than Disney and coming from a significantly smaller production team, it was truly both a passion and experimental project that arose from a story of significance in Chinese culture to be the first subject of a new art form.

Literature, Film, and Television: *Data Collection*

The mediums of art I will be analyzing and categorizing include various types of literature, live-action and animated film and television. I have gathered different key phrases to determine how non-human primates are represented in the historical media record up to 2019, primarily in film and television. Terminology used to create categories has been borrowed from Crist 1999, Scott 2007, and Pick 2011. I began to look at how primates are portrayed by questioning whether they were depicted as active subjects or objects in media.

I came to the conclusion through Crist 1999's description of subject and object that all primates are objects in media depicted as subjects. Media is a tangible creation by humans, hereto an object where we control how the world created is carried out and how the characters act. Crist 1999 refers to object where "inexorable forces act, [behaving] in certain ways" (4). Humans create and control the worlds set up in media, making the depictions active subjects in all objective media. Subjects are embedded in "patterns of reasoning" (6) that can be translated

as archetypes which are “typical examples”, wherein the typical becomes repeated or a pattern. Patterns in media can therefore be coded as tropes that are “common or overused themes”. Since the object, media, is meant to be the reading of subjects, subjects hereto have action. The active subject, of fiction specifically, is “living in a world where events and objects are meaningful” (Crist 1999, 4).

Literature, Film, and Television: *Terminology*

From there, an active subject can be further defined. In this division the key terms were left broad as this stage of interpretation varies greatly among culture and individual viewings of media. The three terms, borrowed by Crist 1999, include: meaningful, authored, and continuous. The term meaningful describes the experience of relationships. Authored describes agency and will, and the term continuous is about connection with others and surrounding environment. Each term could easily overlap in identifying non-human primate characters in media, so I split each into smaller sub-divisions of cute and monstrous (Scott 2007).

Whether a primate is portrayed as meaningful and cute versus monstrous is the difference between positive or negative interpretation and reaction from audiences. I chose to use the dichotomy of cute and monstrous as described by Scott 2007 because positive and negative are more biased in cultural schematic views of subjects. While cute and monstrous definitions are still varied, they rely more on the physical-emotional responses to sight rather than elicited responses based on memory and experience. These are not static categories for media, as both art and informational forms of media can twist the two concepts to draw the most attention from viewers. Furthermore, everyone has their own sense of interpretation when analyzing media invoking various reactions which do not adhere to strict categories. Cute can be described as sharp from its’ predecessor acute, or cunning, clever, and full of wit; while monstrous can be

described as marvelous, warning, immoral, large, or strange. However, marvelous or warning could transfer into the realm of cute with the terminology of being charming that can there be translated into scheming through using charm, a trickster, that is inherently clever as well and still cute but the description in of itself still sounds monstrous in nature.

Under cute and monstrous will be terms from Pick 2011 and myself. Cutes' terms include trickster, educator, beauty, and existence. Under monstrous is death, vulnerability, ornamentation, and existence. Existence, borrowed from Pick 2011, is under both as its' cultural definition in media portrayals of primates differs depending on historical events. For example, existence could be a term of acuteness and cleverness (or cute) in media including stories out of research (Gordon 2016). Today, the popularized studies of Jane Goodall and her chimpanzee research could be considered cute representation of existence. The work anthropomorphizes, or brings together, chimpanzees and humans through intelligence and emotion; furthermore, it could go under the category of beauty in regard to understanding the dichotomy of human behavior and nature.

Human behavior can cause existence to become a monstrous portrayal of non-human primates as well in the case of media from times of war against other people or nature. *Planet of the Apes* (1968) for example, the original author depicts apes and humans as naturally cruel as it was written as a reaction to World War 2, de-colonization, and the Cold War politics occurring at the time written. The term ornamentalism under vulnerability refers not to decoration but to the definition from the Ukraine Soviet film director Kira Muratova in her work *Asthenic Syndrome* (1989). Muratova describes ornamentalism as the artful playfulness of cruelty involving humans and animals (Pick 2011).

Vulnerability as a media category is borrowed from Foucault's theory of surveillance. Characters, the actors of media, are constantly under surveillance by the world in the story as well as by audiences which exist outside of the object. Vulnerability of a character is a mechanism of conveying the nakedness of thought and action which is a monstrous attribute. If a character is a vulnerable one, they are aware of and part of the system of oppression in narrative and either exploit or destroy it by their own means whether it be through outside forces within the narrative, inner turmoil, or through relationships. All of this categorization based on Foucault's theory of surveillance can be translated back into continuous, authored, or meaningful vulnerability (Foucault 2002).

Death is placed under the category of monstrous to describe harbingers or those who wish upon death to themselves or others. Death was almost under cute as well as it is often toyed with as slapstick in the animated realm, but it does not line up with the definition of cute as much as it does monstrous. Primates being involved with the sphere of immortality is also a deterrent of the pet trade, however, it could perpetuate other wildlife trade activities including poaching through hunting. Educator and beauty on the other hand are cute-oriented terms with the characteristics of a sharp mind and charming demeanors. Trickster is also under cute, aforementioned for being cunning and clever.

Literature, Film, and Television: *Analysis*

The various films and TV shows that were categorized under these categories were retrieved from IMDB by using the key phrases "monkey", "primate", and "ape" to find entertainment, not documentary or news-based, media. Of the films reviewed that included primates, the majority were from the 1990s and the 2010s (*Fig. 3.1*). Fully animated film and CGI-incorporated primates were the most common representations of primates in my sample. Of

television, most primate representation came from the 1990s and was also mostly animated.

CUTE	MEANINGFUL	AUTHORED	CONTINUOUS
TRICKSTER	<i>Madagascar</i> (2005); <i>Simpsons</i> (1989); <i>Pirates of the Caribbean</i> (2003); <i>Camp Lazlo</i> (2004); <i>Speed Racer</i> (1967)	<i>Friends</i> (1994); <i>Night at the Museum</i> (2006); <i>Rio</i> (2011)	<i>Bojack Horseman</i> (2014)
EDUCATOR	<i>Wild Thornberry's</i> (1998); <i>Tuca and Bertie</i> (2019); <i>Curious George</i> (1939, 2006); <i>Dora the Explorer</i> (2000); <i>Madagascar</i> (2005)	<i>Tarzan</i> (1918)	<i>Lion King</i> (1994); <i>Zoboomafoo</i> (1999)
BEAUTY	<i>Kung Fu Panda</i> (2008); <i>Sing</i> (2016)		<i>Bush Baby, Little Angel of the Grasslands</i> (1992)
EXISTENCE	<i>Every Which Way but Loose</i> (1978); <i>Indiana Jones</i> (1981); <i>Life of Pi</i> (2012)	<i>Tarzan</i> (1999); <i>Indiana Jones</i> (1984)	<i>George of the Jungle</i> (1997)
MONSTROUS			
DEATH	<i>Princess Iron Fan</i> (1941)	<i>Power Puff Girls</i> (1998); <i>Monkey Paw</i> (1902)	
VULNERABILITY	<i>King Kong</i> (1933); <i>Kim Possible</i> (2002)	<i>Sing</i> (2016); <i>Family Guy</i> (1999)	<i>Rampage</i> (2018); <i>Monkey Shines</i> (1988)
ORNAMENTAL		<i>Ace Ventura</i> (1994, 1995); <i>the Secret Life of Pets 2</i> (2019)	<i>Dexter's Laboratory</i> (1996)
EXISTENCE	<i>I am Weasel</i> (1997); <i>Great Grape Ape</i> (1975); <i>Aladdin</i> (1992)	<i>Planet of the Apes</i> (1968); <i>Jungle Book</i> (1967); <i>Lancelot Link: Secret Chimp</i> (1970)	<i>Lady and the Tramp</i> (1955)

Figure 3.1: Organization of film and television media that involves non-human primate characters. Each piece of media is listed in relation to what the character represents, the top half being “cute” characters and the bottom being “monstrous”. Some literature was added to juxtapose with its’ visual adaptations. See Appendix B for explanations of categories.

A previous study on live-action primate actors from the 1990s to 2011 found that chimpanzees, capuchins, and cercopithecids were the most common and were in anthropogenic environments for 87% of the time. Findings also showed that they were always in trailers, and

the films were mostly comedic (Aldrich 2018). The reasoning behind the 1990s being a popular decade of primate representation was due to the technological revolution in communication, information, and entertainment (Morrow, Jameson, and Trinidad 2017). More access to information was available on non-human primates to reference for drawing and writing these characters. The increased trade connections and communications also allowed for more media in general. The globalization of archetypes sparked out of this revolution as well.

Some of the entertainment media listed in the figure above has background characters that either are reoccurring or had some sort of significant line. *Lady and the Tramp* (1955) is listed in the figure because, even though there was a single shot of non-human primates, Tramp and Lady have a short dialogue on them. When trying to remove a muzzle from Lady, the pair sneak into a zoo to find an animal to help them remove it. When passing the ape exhibit Tramp and Lady say:

“[Tramp] No, no, no. No use even asking them. They wouldn't understand.

[Lady] They wouldn't?

[Tramp] Uh-uh. Too closely related to humans” (*Lady and the Tramp* 1955)

This commentary explicitly acknowledges both ignorance and intelligence as an institutional characteristic among apes. Other media included in the table consists of reenactments of literature and has introduced animal characters instead of keeping true to the original narrative.

In Disney's *Aladdin* (1992) the character Abu who is the protagonist, Aladdin's, sidekick was originally a human thief (“The Thousand and One Nights | Summary, Themes, & Facts” n.d.). He was recreated as an animal sidekick to be more appealing to the family audience and be a sign of monstrous existence as he, while a hero of the story, is a representation of Aladdin without an understanding of human connection – a kleptomaniac who cannot give up what he

steals unless he is guilted by his friend. However, even though he would still be under the monstrous category he would be one of the few exceptions who would perpetuate the pet trade since he is still a protagonist and comedic relief, sparking joy for the audience. The way he is illustrated is an ambiguous representation of a macaque. In the remake (2019) he does not represent an Old World monkey, but instead a capuchin, a New World monkey (*Fig. 3.2*). Material orientation, or the translation across different media, of primates creates misrepresentation of primates from various regions and leaves audiences even more uninformed on primates in the real world for artful experimentation (Lamarre 2011). The lack of information may lead people to wanting to buy primates and they will purchase the species that most closely resembles what is on screen.

The phenomenon of wanting to buy animals seen in media has been referred to as the “Harry Potter Effect” as animals being portrayed as protagonists or sidekicks on screen has directly increased the purchasing of exotics, snowy barn owls in the case of *Harry Potter* (Nijman and Nekaris 2017). When primates are portrayed and represented as cute characters on



Figure 3.2: Abu from the 1992 Aladdin versus the 2019 remake. The CGI rendition strikes a resemblance of a New World monkey rather than Old World suggesting an active pet trade in the film’s narrative that takes place in a fictional Middle Eastern space (Image from Screenrant).

the screen this creates a reaction of cute aggression in audiences that in turn invokes a desire of caring (Aragón et al. 2015). When primates are often represented in visual entertainment media under the cute category this distorts audiences' understanding of conservation status and can encourage pet ownership (Ross, Vreeman, and Lonsdorf 2011), however, the use of chimpanzees in live-action commercials next to humans elicits a sense of worry from audiences on the wellbeing of the apes (Schroepfer et al. 2011). The emotional reactions that may or may not evoke desire of ownership of primates are based heavily on depiction and context. When it comes to apes specifically in cinema "a long-standing narrative of an ontological humanness under threat from the animality both outside and within itself" (Bishop 2008, 250) is evoked which has been best exemplified in cinematic releases such as *Planet of the Apes* (1968) and *King Kong* (1933).

King Kong (1933) explores the human-ape rather than humans and apes which has been a recurring theme in literature notably with Kafka (Lorenz 2007). The literature of metamorphosis is "a vehicle for discussing human identity, its feelings and flaws" (Pick 2011, 79) where humans are often in the world of ape when morally monstrous, but become human once more when lessons are learned as to say animals are inherently monstrous, avoiding a notion of hybridity. This theme in literature uses that post-war ideology as mentioned and is its' own take on social evolution in entertainment media.

The idea of calling non-human subjects cute in literature has been used throughout most of literary history since the sixteenth century. Chaucer's works in the Medieval period included the modern definition of cute which arose out of this period in English (Kao 2018). However, non-human primates can be used as ethical mirrors through the language of insults. Shakespeare used primate-related terms as insult. One insult that was used heavily in racialized media was

calling those considered dumb or primitive an ape or monkey. The four-most used terms included: marmoset, baboon, ape, and monkey and relate directly to the science of primates at the time of writing. Not much was known of primates at the time, however the uncanny evolutionary relationship had invoked an understanding of the monstrous to Shakespeare as evident in his work (Kantha 2014).

In *Journey to the West*, which was written around the same time period in China during the Ming Dynasty, the Monkey King is seen as monstrous rather than cute, as well as a hybrid depiction of human and ape-like. As the antagonist who tries to murder the princess for her fan to gain more power, Monkey is also considered ambiguous since he cannot redeem himself in order to maintain cosmic order in connection to Buddhism – a human choice to put spirituality above reality. While Monkey is cemented as a trickster, he is still a monstrous representation of non-human primates. He was characterized to be an ethical mirror for humans rather than be a depiction of animalistic ethics (Soon Ng 2017). This ethical mirror has become a popular part of Asian narrative as depicted in the graphic novel *American Born Chinese* (2009). In this rendition Monkey is transformed into a metaphor for being a minority during “Yellow Peril” era racism and parody of enlightenment. The monstrous Monkey had become a symbol of understanding racism and identifying humanity at its natural core (Chaney 2011).

Media and Cruelty

How does all of this media categorization relate to aspects of cruelty described by Grugan? The use of primate actors has decreased overtime due to both technological advantages and understanding of conservation and abuse. While there are Hollywood guidelines in film, non-human primate actors are never in a state of true comfort relating to the five freedoms as they are not in their natural setting and not domesticated. Grugan reviewed animal abuse reports

in news and used grounded theory to see how news media, as opposed to entertainment media, often depicted primates. The seven categories they identified included: (1) neutrality, (2) condemnation, (3) sympathy for the animal, (4) drama, (5) advocacy, (6) humor, and (7) sympathy for the offender (Grugan 2019, 92). These categories are more clearly depicted in documentary media with non-human primates. An episode from BBC's short documentary series on Palm Oil: *Leuser rainforest: Baby orangutans rescued from Indonesia's pet trade* (2019) depicts most of these categories by showing the reactions of pet primates being taken away, as well as how orphaned primates are being taken care of by volunteers. In many older forms of entertainment media these interpretations of primates in space and time could be categorized in this manner.

The use of primate actors could contextualize humor, drama, and sympathy for the offender/animal in their narratives. In *Every Which Way but Loose* (1978) an orangutan actor is depicted as the protagonist's pet and best friend – a shoulder to lean on meaningful relationship. While the orangutan should not be used for live-action film, the character portrayed might have made viewers think of orangutans as natural companions who enjoy the sort of company displayed in the film. Other film media with primate actors may do the same reaction when portrayed as cute.

Conclusion

Media throughout this chapter has been examined as a form of stereotyping and shaping the identities of animals for humans despite possibly never seeing them in real life. The categorization of non-human primates must extend into the realm of anthropomorphism as means of understanding humanity as well as a reason to become interested in primate conservation and being. The result of advocating for the pet trade may be the opposite, transcending pet owners as

monstrous in the narrative of the pet trade and non-human primates being cemented as their demise – cute, regardless of the media out there that creates monstrous narratives and stereotypes of non-human primates. The ability to understand the self through animal has been done on both spectrums from *Curious George* (1939) and *Zoboomafoo* (1999) educating children on human activities and the world around them to *Princess Iron Fan* (1941) and *Rampage* (2018) where environment and material world can lead the morality and ethics of an individual astray.

While the closely related categories I had constructed for understanding traditional media representations connects entertainment and primate trade from the sixteenth century to works of the twenty-first century – how might social media deviate from them? Categories of monstrous and cute may not differ much in their advertisements of the illegal primate pet trade, but social media is constantly transcending and experimenting with perceptions of animals. The constant flow of information may be categorized different based on algorithmic bias and the fast delivery of news and background on posts and accounts that can determine how many likes they might receive. But the knowledge behind a post, while ever-present with Google searches, is not always entered into someone’s social sphere of interest while browsing social media. Film has focused on conservation through documentary with one notable exception from the past decade. The film *Rio* (2011) directed by Carlos Saldanha was focused on the pet trade of the spix macaw which was shortly after the films’ airing declared to be “possibly extinct” (Wei 2018). Social media as a tool for awareness in conservation can be more effective than film or literature as its’ purpose is to connect the world and it has the ability to do so in a fast manner. However, without the knowledge and passion circulating newfound global social spheres the opposite impact can occur. Chapter 3 will examine how free social media has perpetuated the trade through individuals posting images of primates in the trade.

CHAPTER 3: THE PRIMATE INFLUENCER

As someone who was born in the late 1990s, I have grown up alongside some of the development of web-culture and heavily participated in it. I always strive to educate on social media posts I may find problematic, despite feeling that my comment will only be drowned out amongst the hundreds, upon thousands, of other users that may see the post. I enjoy posting and supporting illustrations and other works of primates I come across online, however, up until the point of research for this project I had yet to ask: how damning is a drawing? It has been suggested that wildlife photography is a gateway for unsustainable conservation tourism. Posts with non-human primates advertise places for aspiring Instagram influencers to travel to for the perfect picture. However, in obtaining photoshoots, these posts also introduce species as aesthetic rather than living creatures that should not be engaged within anthropocentric situations as they are either endangered or not domesticated (Mutalib 2018; Kitson and Nekaris 2017). Social media platforms allow for species to become an asset of experience in these posts, which not only denotes them as an object but also makes them appear more accessible to the content creator and audience. By liking or sharing these posts, there is a higher probability of advertisements and similar posts to pop up that may encourage users to purchase non-human primates.

Presented in this chapter will be an overview of social media, its culture, and the sociality surrounding algorithms. An analysis of popularity trends of images including pet primates and risky wildlife tourism from the Summer of 2019 into September 2019 – a month after the end of high tourism season when large amounts of social media posts were created – will also be discussed.

Social Media: The Self, The Posts, and the Algorithm

Digital media including social media has transcended the idea of self and audience with its accessibilities and innate interactive nature. Digital media is about “personalization, or mass-customization of content [in] creating knowledge about users from their data” (Fisher and Mehozay 2019, 2). Mass media’s focus on the audience is traditionally based on social theory and in consumer research while digital media, posted by anyone who wishes to, seeks audiences through “big data” which “assumes [the] performative individual” (1). The self is, therefore, becoming “communicative and commercial” in digital media. The self and its platforms, based on activity, then advertise the consumer’s desires since they are within reach (12). This concept of consumers advertising their desires creates new social practices, making the digital space a new medium and social world (Gershon 2017). When posts that support the pet trade, or more overt business ads that sell non-human primates, end up on someone’s feed it is not based on human research at companies alone, but rather the coding of algorithms that trace and follow the data history by the audience consumer. While this may not be the wish of the user, posting habits can unknowingly, and sometimes unwillingly, lead them to a path of supporting the pet trade market. Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned the activity of commenting on these posts in an attempt to educate other viewers, but I am still inadvertently supporting the post by engaging with it by giving it more comments. The algorithmic system is set up to increase the popularity of the users, the platform, and the businesses and sponsors using social media for capital gains.

Even though these images of anthropomorphized primates are promoting abuse and ill-care of wildlife to social media users, they constantly circulate the web. What constitutes deviance online, and how can it be swiftly reported? Some famous examples of deviance online include the physical abuse of animals, trolling, and forums surrounded by hate crime ideologies.

These deviances appear on major platforms and provoke quick responses of retaliation due to their problematic actions and discourses. Online, there have been discourses on free speech when faced with hate speech: how can social media platforms censor hate speech and where is the line of censorship drawn? Deviance online is often linked with the power of social groups. Like-minded individuals communicate to bring their manifestos into mainstream media. Since the primate pet trade is unorganized, it is harder to link it to this kind of deviance. Even though the practices are inhumane and fall under the category of animal abuse, as it violates the five freedoms of humane living standards (*see the list in Chapter 1*), it lacks a sense of community. However, the support of these posts can fall under deviant behavior according to the theory of collective action.

Collective action theory is “all activity or common or shared interest among two or more individuals” (Al-khateeb and Agarwal 2019, 11). Those who like and share posts with non-human primates in human settings are in a collective group of individuals who have an interest in the aesthetic of illegally obtained animals, mostly due to the perception of cute to share. It is considered that to “have interest in conducting deviant acts (...) can cause significant danger to the public in general” (4). Even though the danger may not be direct to the public from liking a post in the United States, the support of the pet trade does lead to the degradation of livelihoods. The individuals who risk their lives to seize these animals make a small living wage for themselves and possible families and are exploited by the middle-people of the process who take most of the profit in the end. This process decimates the lives of these non-human primates, people, and their home environments.

When websites and social media websites ban the action of selling wildlife over their platforms, as it is illegal under federal law, loopholes in policy are often used as gateways for

sellers to reach deviant audiences. Sellers who enter the public sphere without being banned by moderators or reported by audiences are referred to as “rouge sellers” (Burton 2016, 404). Rouge sellers often enter the user’s algorithmic spheres of social interest with ease undermining both website policy and human error in moderating. Due to these aspects of digital media, human agency is beginning to be encoded by algorithms and is taking power away from employees of companies. The circulation of media of today has become a choice of computer coded by individuals’ audiences have little to no interaction or conversation with (Beer 2017, 5). What an audience can view is a result of calculative objectivity by algorithms that hold new forms of social power and authority. The conduct of conduct, or governmentality, of social media, is presently a circulating feedback chain between submissions of users and the knowledge of algorithms (Beer 2017). The ability for algorithms to moderate posts as well as enhance the monetary processes of influencer and advertiser has given the power to social media platforms and their major contributors.

Understanding Primates Through Memes

The public perception of primates based off of pets posted by users can be seen as beneficial as it has “introduced these primates to a large cross-section of society that would not normally come into contact with them” (Nekaris 2013, 1), but still remains to be a largely negative impact of the communication revolution. The repetition of theme, through showing and sharing media, largely contributes to how people view wildlife today. Some of the gateways into primate pet ownership include travel advertisements. Primates are increasingly being used as photo props for many tourism areas. The use of primates in tourism areas can result in their increasing decline. It has been suggested that “the photo prop trade may be part of a larger, emerging, illegal trade” as there have been reports of foreigners buying primates such as lorises

from employees who obtained them for photographic advertisements (Osterberg and Nekaris 2015, 16).

The posts that circulate around social media could either be from owners posting about their pets' quotidian lifestyle, sometimes advertising from sponsors due to their mass following, but more commonly found online are memes. Memes can be defined as “vernacular creativity” (Highfield and Duguay 2015). Vernacular creativity is when online users are “creating their own limitations and remixes of popular content, using online platforms to make, share, and inspire new media” (2). Memes are part of the reason culture online is increasingly ephemeral as they can be manipulated, combined with other memes, and create new meaning. This is due to their nature of being looping visual media through repetition. Many memes that have circulated social media platforms involving primates had victims to the illegal pet trade. Some of these include “monkey getting a haircut” and “Darwin the IKEA monkey” (Fig. 4.1). However, becoming viral can lead to action for the primate. For Darwin, a monkey found wondering around an IKEA

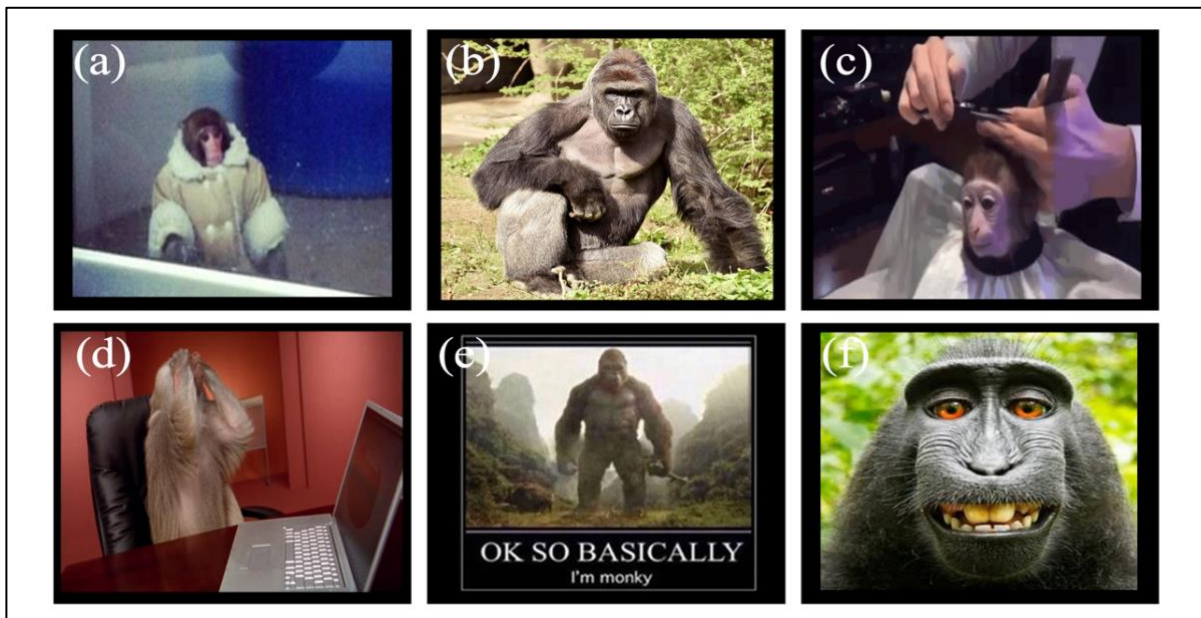


Figure 4.1: A variety of popular memes that have circulated social media since the beginning of the 2010's. (a) Darwin the monkey in IKEA. (b) Harambe the gorilla (c) Monkey getting a haircut. (d) Baboon using technology. (e) “Ok so basically I'm monkey” based off of a still frame from *King Kong*. (f) A macaque taking a selfie. See Appendix C for further information.

in Toronto wearing a snow jacket, is now living in a sanctuary after some public critiques on his welfare (Crothers 2015). Other memes have brought about questions of conservation and protection of wildlife. The Harambe coverage from 2016 is the most notable and recent primate example. When a child had fallen into a gorilla exhibit at the Cincinnati zoo, the zookeepers had fatally shot the silverback in order to protect the child (Mkono and Holder 2019).

Even though there has been critique from both ends of the argument by primatologists on whether or not he should have been killed, this opened the platform to social media users on animal welfare and conservation issues. There was an abundance of collective moral reflexivity in rejecting “anthropocentric justifications of actions [users saw] as causing unnecessary suffering of animals” (6). Despite Harambe soon after becoming a meme, an icon many users had talked about as if he was a close friend, the story had still informed audiences about primate conservation.

Animal Abuse in Social Media Culture

There has been growing concern for animal protection as social media has become more engrained in cultural practice. Some streamers have been outed as animal abusers in the past year after accidentally leaving cameras on while hurting their pets. Twitch streamer Alinity was outed as an animal abuser in the summer of 2019. During a stream, she was recorded throwing her cat over her shoulder after petting them and instantly received backlash from viewers and those who never watched her before, from the massive sharing of the clip. Around the same time a YouTuber, Brookehairs, left the camera on as she had yelled at and violently pushed her dog out of her room and received similar backlash. The actions of these influencers led back to the question of social media censorship. The Twitch streamer had a large audience and brought in a lot of income for the platform and was not immediately removed from the service until another

popular streamer decided to boycott the company and use a competitor platform. YouTube had quickly demonetized Brookehaupts, however, not all abuse exists in these abrupt forms and sometimes requires education in order to prevent supporting creators who use non-human primates for monetary gain. When both influencers and social media platforms are receiving money based off of animal content, then it is harder to report and censor seemingly harmless images (Beachum 2019). A post of a chimpanzee scrolling through Instagram was posted by an account that “claimed to be conservation based” and was quickly debunked by Jane Goodall who noted that the company was based in Florida and filmed the chimpanzee there (Edevane 2019). However, posts like the chimpanzee using a smartphone may evoke awe and a sense of the uncanny valley in users in seeing the anthropomorphic activity. The sharing of knowledge on how and why to stop supporting these posts is valuable and urgent information social media users should be shown, rather than seeking out (Edes 2019).

Social Media and Primate Popularity

The amount of social media users worldwide has reached around 3.484 billion with the global increase into 2019 being 9%. The largest amount of internet usage is in Northern America with 95% of the population being involved (Chaffey 2019). Social media has a significant number of users and a wildly untapped culture in academic circles due to its ephemeral nature. However, the posts of primates seem to be increasing with the growing Instagram tourist phenomena. Social media sub-cultures constantly diffuse with one another making social ties and cultural beliefs evolve and expand constantly. Social movements as well as posts that may fall into deviant categories are constantly reaching global scales through liking and sharing media (Grabowicz et al. 2012). One study found that a viral video of a lemur who was in an anthropocentric environment and a pet, invoked the desirability in owning the primate. Through

a keyword analysis on Twitter as the video was shared it was discovered that “most tweets (91%) did not make reference to a specific species of lemur” (Clarke et al. 2019, 1). While viral videos may be able to introduce the physicality’s of new species, they do not always succeed in education, especially when portrayed as pets.

Data Collection

Data collected for this project focused heavily on how problematic postings of primates penetrated various social media platforms. I examined how often these posts would pop up as most popular or if they would appear on top under the default ordering on social media pages. Data were collected from the end of April 2019 through July 2019 and additionally throughout September 2019. Every Saturday screenshots were taken of top or recent posts on various platforms including Instagram, Reddit, Twitter, and YouTube. I chose to do the research in these timeframes as they included the peak and end of the U.S. summer season. PEW research center had found that 7 out of 10 Americans use social media and that most schools begin by Labor Day in September. The “summer months” then, are when the age demographic that use social media the most (18-29 year old’s) are actively posting more often as well as traveling more (Desilver 2019; Perrin and Anderson 2019; PEW Research Center 2019). From there, I assumed that there would be more travel photographs posted as well as pet posts circulating during this time frame. I found that Instagram overall had the most posts of both the pet trade and risky tourism activities in the analysis even in September.

Data Collection: *Methodology and Theory*

Data obtained were collected through methodologies pertaining to grounded theory and axial coding. Grounded theory was valuable in understanding how often pet trades are shared by categorizing hashtags and content. Content was originally categorized both by primate and non-

primate categories of pet trade and risky wildlife tourism but was further downsized to primates in analysis. Axial coding is “the process of relating pieces, or codes, of data to each other (...) to identify central (...) phenomena to one’s data (to make) connections between categories that reveal themes, new categories, or subcategories” (Allen 2017). I related media in posts to hashtags and the two categories formed in order to target a central phenomenon: the rise in primate pet trade imagery throughout specific hashtags. Unfortunately, there were constraints such as doing this through individual searches rather than using a program that could scour social media. Hashtags are also arbitrary categorizations chosen by the content creator or sharer, and if the key term is not in the post, my search might have missed more images of the trade. I only grabbed a small sample of the possible posts related to the trade; however, the results still show a jarring number of posts with pet primates and/or poor tourism behavior. The model I used for identifying these images can be replicated in future research to build up a record of posting patterns of the subject throughout the years in order to create algorithms that capture these activities and ban pet primate-related posts.

The apparatus used to understand the media I analyzed included the theories of social worlds, network society, and networked individualism. I adapted my analytic view of social network from Pink 2011’s argument of social networks as a notion. Pink argues that, unlike social worlds, social networks are “neutral, heuristic, inviting [of] empirical investigation and comparative analysis not associated with ideological current” (Pink et al. 2016, 121). The digital social network is horizontal and connected rather than warm and together like a community. Social worlds theory is where individuals from differing groups that are diverse in thought and ideology come together, interact, and share resources and information. However, this theory does not look at the specific effects of differing cultures together and cannot answer questions such as

how pictures of primates are shared in the first place. The Theory of Network Society by Castelis looks at how “fluid transitional networks are the dominant social formations (...) replacing earlier formations such as community or associations” (105). Juxtaposed next to the Theory of Networked Individualism by Wellman that examines “networked individualism, geographically dispersed personal communities” (106) a continuum of understanding actors in social media and how and why content is shared can be thoroughly analyzed.

Through data collection, I was able to discover the complexities of how primates were acquired, especially on accounts that shared images of them as influencers. Notable aspects I found were primates from various parts of Southeast Asia including slow lorises were often posted by accounts of people that lived in similar regions. However, capuchins and chimpanzees were often posted by English-speaking accounts. The map of how these images would be shared, however, is on a global scale regardless of national boundary as long as someone has social media access and interest in these kinds of posts. Even though I might have found some of these trends, however, the “fluid connectivity [of social relations] changes with technology” (107) and can lead to vast changes in how people post and who purchases pet primates. The trend in influencers of the trade could be drastically shifted by the end of the next year online.

Analysis

Findings from my study show that in total, Instagram had the most images of pet primates as well as risky tourism behaviors. From there YouTube, Twitter, and Reddit follow. *Figure 4.2* shows the total sums and averages from each site:

Figure 4.2: Image Analysis Totals		
Pet Trade Totals		
Social Media Platform	Total Sum	Total Average
Instagram	240	2.09
YouTube	121	2.24
Twitter	71	0.66
Reddit	29	0.806
Risky Tourism Totals		
Social Media Platform	Total Sum	Total Average
Instagram	94	0.82
YouTube	12	0.222
Twitter	43	0.401
Reddit	29	0.083

From there, I broke up the selections by hashtags, subreddits, and keywords (*see Appendix 1*). I ran into some issues with the keywords I chose, and particularly with YouTube. Since YouTube does not update as regularly as the other platforms listed, I checked it for only a few Saturdays out of the summer as I did not want only to be recording posts from the same YouTuber. I had also chosen different keywords throughout the search to see if I could diversify my results and reach into more parts of the YouTube community. All of the other platforms used, however, kept the same terms in searching and were consistently viewed on Saturdays. YouTube was more of an exploratory research with the terms I used. I stuck with terms such as monkey instead of ape as monkey tends to be the common vernacular for primates and I wanted to observe where more people were posting.

In my search, there was also the issue of bias in the time of the day I looked at posts, the bias of what images I viewed as supporting the pet trade or risky behavior, and the limit of posts

observed. Since every platform has different layouts, it would be arbitrary to only look at the first eight posts on every page. My goal for the research was to use structured observation of websites; however, even though I always observed websites on Saturdays I would look at them at different points of the day. Regardless, I still found a large amount of posts with pet primates. Future endeavors in understanding patterns of posting and content popularity, web scraping with app program interfaces would be highly beneficial. However, this was still a valuable model for examining internet habits over the summer months. Graphs were created to understand the relationships between terms, dates, and posts for all platforms except YouTube since it was largely irregular (*fig. 4.3-4.5*). There were no direct correlations between seasonality, trending, recent posts, and images of the primate pet trade and risky tourism were evident in the visuals. Despite the experimental nature of the project, evidence from the summer points towards the possibility of certain terms housing more imagery of pet primates and risky tourism behaviors than others, even if no pattern in posting time has been observed from research. The graphs indicate two different kinds of posts per key term. The first line represents the most popular posts, while the second represents the most recent.

Conclusion

Although it appears problematic primate photographs are more accessible by term than seasonality, models of research such as this can be used to deduce common themes to effectively reach out and educate the public on the pet trade. Technological advances such as facial recognition software used by researchers could be programmed into algorithms online to do the work for individuals as well (Deb et al. 2018). Media portraying primates has been at a global scale for quite some time but pursuing digital media without the education and awareness stifles conservation practices (Musing, Suzuki, and Nekaris 2015; Jensen et al. 2019). As an ever-

changing, medium, based in the rapid evolution of cultural practice, active activism is necessary for saving non-human primates.

Total Occurrences of Posts Including Pet Primates and Risky Tourism Interactions on Instagram from April to July and September 2019

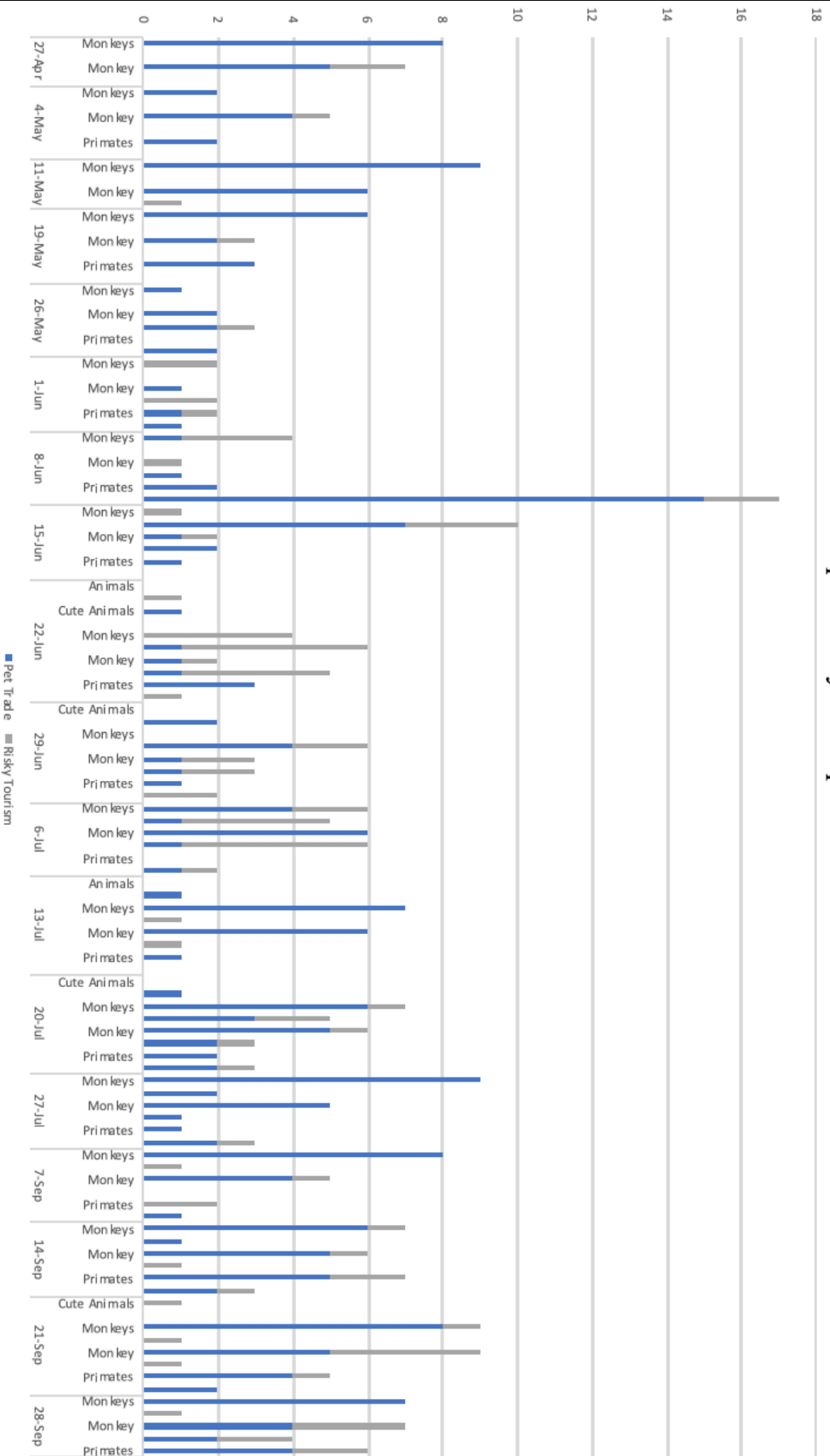


Figure 4.3: The total sum of posts from Instagram with pet primates and risky tourism practices. The bar on the left of each label is the most popular post at the time the screenshot was taken, and next to it, the most recent post. There was no real trend seasonally for Instagram, but it was the application with the most pictures of primates in unsafe environments and situations. One constraint of all of the data is that human eyes analyzed all the screenshots rather than a program which misses a much larger subset of data.

Total Occurrences of Posts Including Pet Primates and Risky Tourism Interactions on Reddit from April to July and September 2019

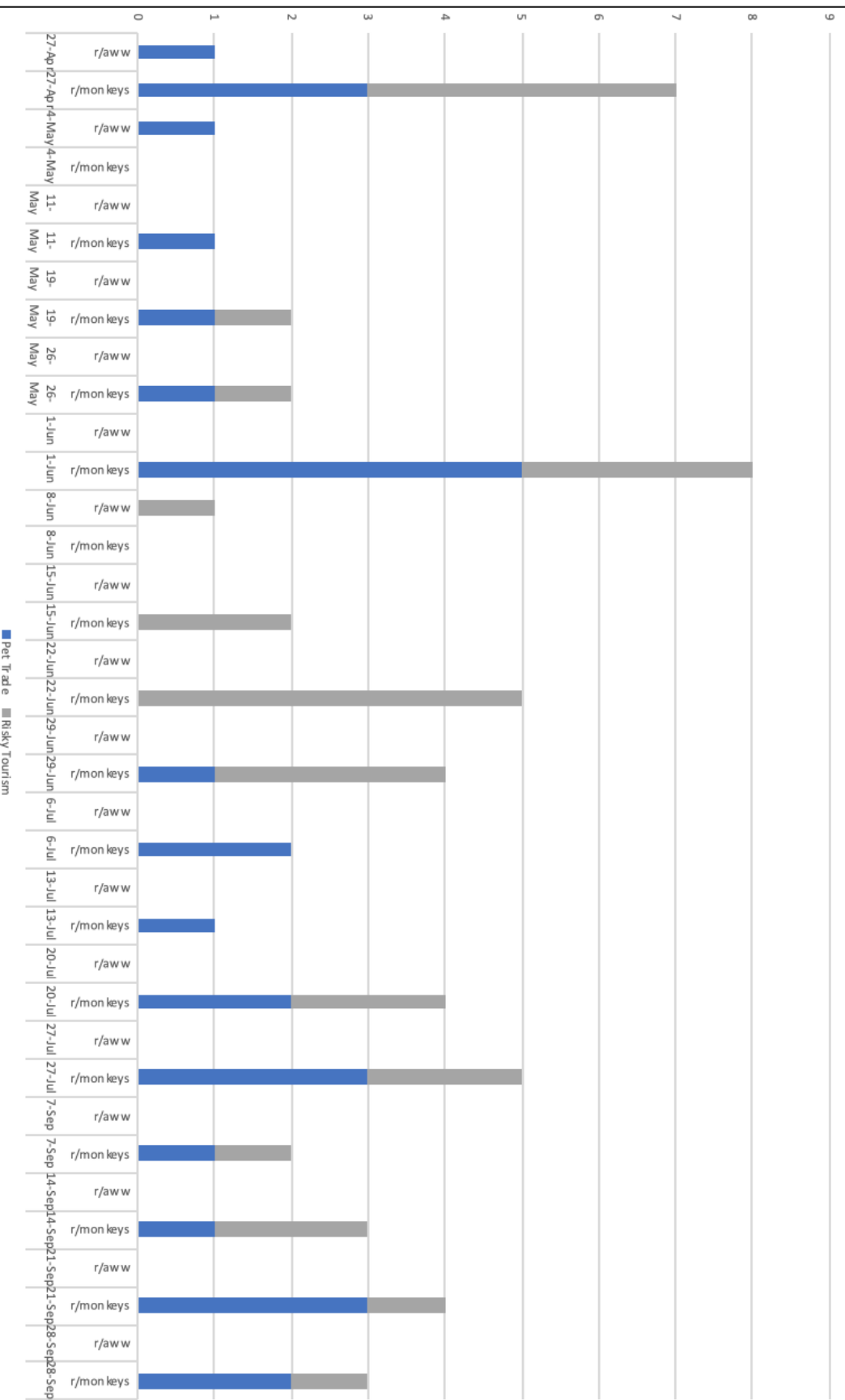


Figure 4.4: The total sum of posts from Reddit with pet primates and risky tourism practices. “r/” represents a community that posts similar images. r/aww is a vastly popular community on the website that posted mainly domesticated animals during the sampling time. r/monkeys had the problematic posts, mostly being risky tourism practices such as selfies or videos featuring humans interacting with non-human primates closely.

Total Occurrences of Posts Including Pet Primates and Risky Tourism Interactions on Twitter from April to July and September 2019

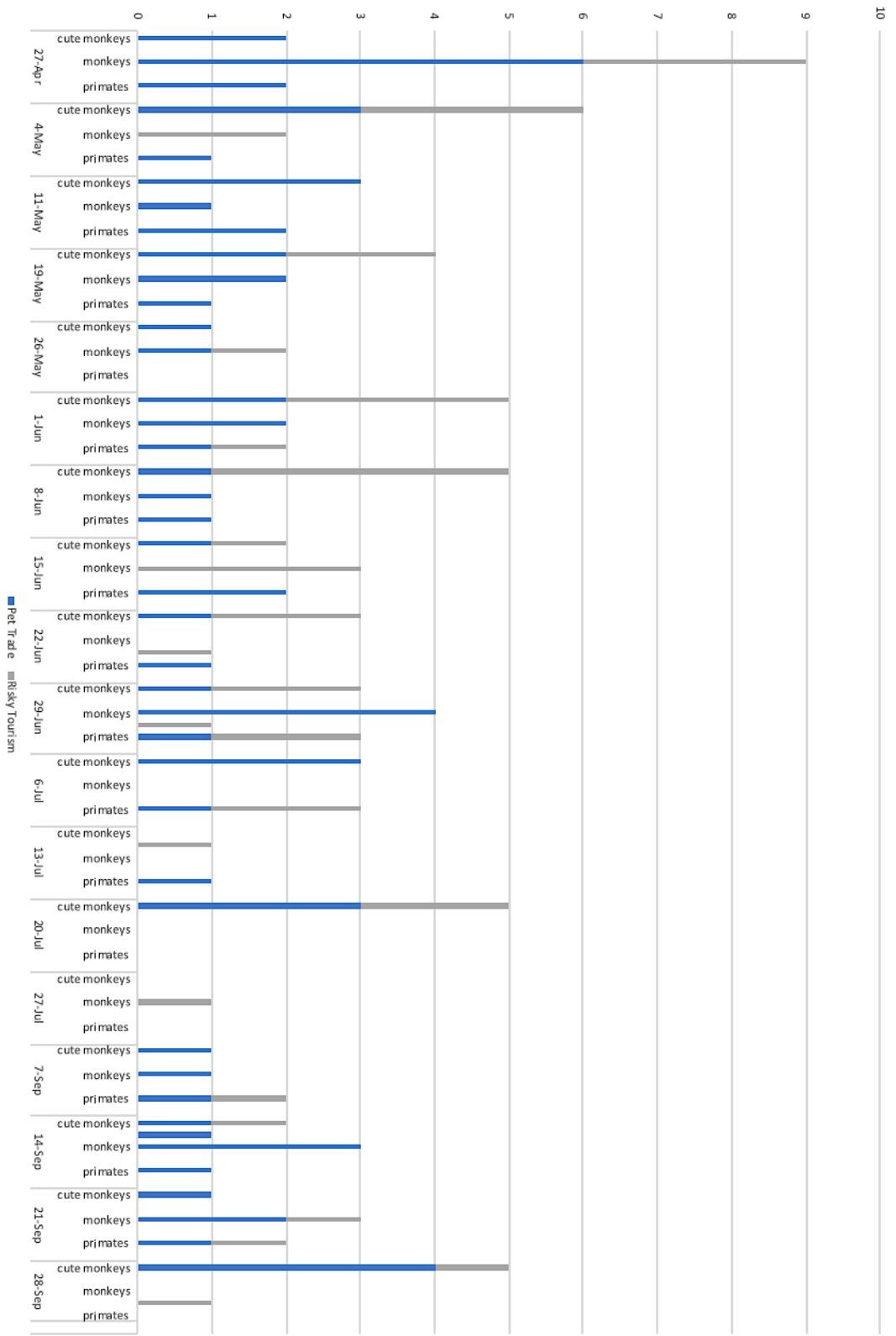


Figure 4.5: The total sum of posts from Twitter with pet primates and risky tourism practices. There were a surprising number of images for Twitter being a text-based social media platform. Posts were obtained through searching key terms in the search bar.

CHAPTER 4:

MAKING OF A PRIMATE PLATFORM

The data collection of the previous two chapters displayed that narratives of representation have the power to impact the public perception of non-human primates and their reputation. These forms of representation can ignite the pet trade market while interrupting conservation initiatives. The guise of an image being taken in the wild can skew a person's perception of primate livelihood and, as trends such as Instagram photo-tourism continue to soar in popularity, activities including the handling of wild animals will continue to seem tantalizing despite their underlying origins. The lack of education creates a space of false stewardship, determinate as greenwashing which not only harms endangered species of primates, but also the local communities trying to make a living off of these unfortunately successful markets (Watson 2017).

There will always be propagated advertisements and ignorance in world knowledge of wildlife and conservation. As the technological revolution has led to increased accessibility in communication with social media, methods of preventing posts from gaining power over conservation efforts while educating the public are also increasingly accessible. I propose that through non-profit initiatives to sponsor famous internet influencers to talk about these issues, then people will be more apt to be conscientious of posts they like, as well where they venture on vacation for the perfect Instagram photo.

Statistics on Internet Usage

Social media accessibility and usage has skyrocketed in a short period considering its creation in the mid to late 1990s. In 2005, only 5% of the American population used social media (PEW Research Center 2019). As of 2019, 90% of the U.S. uses social media. Most regions of

the world in 2019 had over 40% of their population penetrating social media with the two recorded exceptions; Middle and Eastern Africa. The average number of users worldwide is currently at 45% and growing (Chaffey 2019). With the development and consumer initiatives alike, technology has begun to be a part of many peoples' lives in developing nations and impoverished areas. Cell phones without social media access are integrating into various regions of poverty across the globe at fast rates (Duncombe 2014). With the growing necessity of technology for communication due to factors such as health, environmental change, migration, and refugees; the possible adoption of smartphones would be largely accepted by many demographics globally to keep kinship ties connected as well as educate other parts of the world on growing socioeconomic issues (Dahya and Dryden-Peterson 2017).

In the United States, social media usage is becoming a daily aspect of mediated cultural practice for obtaining information on news and entertainment. With roughly one-third of Facebook users checking their feed multiple times a day, social media has made a lasting cultural impact (Perrin and Anderson 2019). Regardless of age, the two most popular social media platforms have consistently been Facebook and YouTube. Influencers, those with the ability to promote items and ideas on social media due to their following, from the YouTube platform would be great to network with for public education. Various demographic groups do diverge in social media platforms and users, and younger users with some college education have higher usage rates and more accounts on average (Perrin and Anderson 2019). However, despite the demographic variances, 7 out of 10 Americans actively use social media (PEW Research Center 2019), showing a positive trend of U.S. usage in age, gender, and community (i.e.: rural, urban, and suburban). Social media is becoming a popular source for advertising and education alike. However, the education itself must be advertised to prevent the sale of non-human primates

online as it is a global issue that encourages habitat degradation, uneven development, and invasive species.

Education in Conservation

Even though extant non-human primates are not endemic to every continent, the pet trade can introduce invasive species to non-endemic areas. Invasive species are one of the top issues of conservation efforts and the pet trade is the main cause of invasives being introduced to new areas (Roth 2019). The mishandling of non-human primates that are purchased as pets leads to the abandonment of them in new areas of the world harming the endemic ecosystem (Anderson, Hostetler, and Johnson 2017). The acknowledgment of the purchase being illegal does not necessarily mean that people are educated on the legalities as giving away an illegal pet at a local animal shelter results in less legal liability than being caught keeping or mishandling species in the United States.

However, corruption is present in the legal system and mishandling by those less qualified with exotics than the traffickers themselves can lead to additional harm to animals (Actman 2016). Even though the amount of captured illegals is a far smaller number than it could be, and rescuing trafficked individual species is an aspect of groups such as Humane Society International and Animal Control facilities, the proper care and education on their ends of non-native exotics needs to be re-examined as the pet trade increases in numbers. In less-developed nations that are poverty-stricken and often are the source of non-human primates for the market, there is a lack of prosecution for those caught selling species. Non-human primates that are confiscated by law enforcement are likely to be recaptured by poachers if introduced back into the wild due to the lack of prosecution (Nijman 2017).

There has been a push towards conservation education by activist groups in these sourced regions of non-human primates. Success has been noted in many efforts, such as the community-based conservation education measures in classrooms and towns of Vietnam on the slow loris trade (Nekaris 2016). Local group conservation can empower communities through education and involvement of demographics that may not have a voice in many areas of their culture. Education for Nature – Vietnam (ENV) focuses on posters and calendars to visually inform the public, through classrooms, streets, and homes alike. Classroom education through posters that illustrate illegal poaching activities informs students the importance of wildlife as well as how the legal system works so that they can feel confident to report whenever they see any illegal practices (“New Primate Poster Shows the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly” 2009).

Larger scaled group efforts have also been effective in mitigating the primate trade. The International Primate Protection League (IPPL) includes various non-profits and NGOs within it that work between international authorities to report cases of illegal trade (Kemmerer 2012). The idea arose in 1973 and was originally a collaboration between Thai and U.S. authorities after Kemmerer noticed open trade in street markets, but communication with other primate initiatives such as the Jane Goodall Institute transformed this idea into a large-scaled association against the trade. However, for the sake of educating the public at the core of the trade, where the product is sourced from, local and visual efforts in education are the most valuable. Large scaled efforts are for mitigating the current trade, whereas local efforts are where the head of the black market can be taken down.

Education through visuals tends to be an effective form of engagement in the classroom setting (Koenig, Koenig, and Sanz 2018). Using visuals to educate the public on the realities of the pet trade market could be an effective method in online engagement. However, overt pathos

in visuals could harm attempts to educate. It would cause people to refuse to pay attention to the issue being depicted as its imagery would provoke uncanny emotions. Gathering information and visuals for education can be a beneficial process for people in areas with non-human primates as well. Filming with local communities can often be another form of educating and empowering people in areas where the pet trade is a high job market (Wright 2010). Filming becomes a new outlet of accessibility to learning about the ecosystem and reintegrating lives and livelihoods into it if locals are allowed to participate. While these groups are making great on-ground efforts that are key to note, and it is important to note these variables in technology, education, and poverty in underdeveloped regions, focusing social media-based education on consumers from developed nations is easier to start with as the complexities of development initiatives deserve localized research and aid.

Visual learning through technology is also beneficial due to issues of accessibility. While it has been shown that younger generations and children are more likely to determine recreational ideas for families, which can lead to more exposure of these issues of conservation through educational trips to zoos and museums, not every household has a familial structure or economic and geographic accessibility to such recreational outlets of education (Turley 2001). Technology should be encouraged as the next educational outlet to reach such demographics as it is especially necessary for conservation as intergenerational learning has been the trend for education on climate issues. Younger generations tend to use technology to reach out to older ones and educate on the current climate crisis (Peterson, Stevenson, and Lawson 2019). The use of technology to educate on the pet trade through visuals and social media should follow a similar pattern of communication.

However, when educating the public through social media on posts to stop supporting, accountability on who is at fault is not necessarily always clear. Sharing knowledge is easier to achieve than ensuring action can and will be done.

Accountability

Social media networking heavily impacts accountability of the individual. Posting a pet primate only gains traction if people like and share the post, hereto the question of who is accountable for supporting an advertisement for purchasing these species. Ultimately, the argument often leads to platforms needing to moderate these posts by banning the original posters and having a system in place where the posts can be reported. However, the censorship of these posts is not as simple as banning every capuchin wearing a dress as photographs of tourism interactions may also fall under the category of pet ownership. Selfies with primates in urban areas could indicate that the species are being used as photo-props and tourists handling them probably paid a fee for that picture. To understand how these posts should be mitigated, as every participant could be considered accountable, the concept of accountability on social media needs to be better defined to fit new forms of social interactions with online posts.

When it comes to targeting audiences, who are supporting these posts, or advertisements of the pet trade, the web of networking transcends a basic kinship network of friends and family. When a post becomes viral and is constantly re-posted and receives likes then multiple cultures are exposed to the idea of pet ownership, often depicted as cute. Accountability on social media can therefore be classified as private that becomes public as there is a very thin boundary between posts with the private, friends and family, and sharing with the public domain (Bovens, Goodin, and Schillemans 2014). Accountability is rarely taken through emotional decisions but rather logistical by companies. This form of accountability as a mechanism is based between

institutions and agents rather than discrete issues between individuals (Bovens et al 2014). On social media, especially with cancel culture, accountability becomes a virtue wherein it becomes a responsibility to be accountable, when the person or party accountable becomes transparent of their situation, owning their accountability.

When it comes to educating the public on posts to avoid, when action by not passively liking posts or actively sharing them occurs, then it becomes a virtue of the self in accountability rather than making the post creator accountable. Someone can make posts all they want, but if they do not become viral then they may not continue to create them as post popularity can lead to income. Posts becoming viral, and content such as a pet primate can be branded for monetary value. The popularity then can create a cultural icon or even a meme that entices people to support these posts, therefore, by not liking them there is a lack of power in the trade being advertised and the audiences are holding themselves accountable. Agency is a powerful tool in holding people accountable and social media is the perfect platform to test actions of accountability on, if people were to stop supporting these posts.

There are various forms of accountability that could become virtuous or mechanic. The contingency theory of accountability states the importance of having a fair mix of the various types of accountability to ensure efficient responsibility (Mansbridge 2014). Three of the more popular forms of accountability that are studied include: sanction-based, trust-based, and dynamic. Sanction-based accountability creates distrust due to pre-existing issues of trust, whereas trust-based accountability relies on justifying trustworthiness in responsibility. These two often exist in parallel with one another in situations of accountability but balancing the player's opinions and options can create dynamic accountability that focuses on innovation, social networks and inclusivity (Mansbridge 2014). All of these situations are based in context

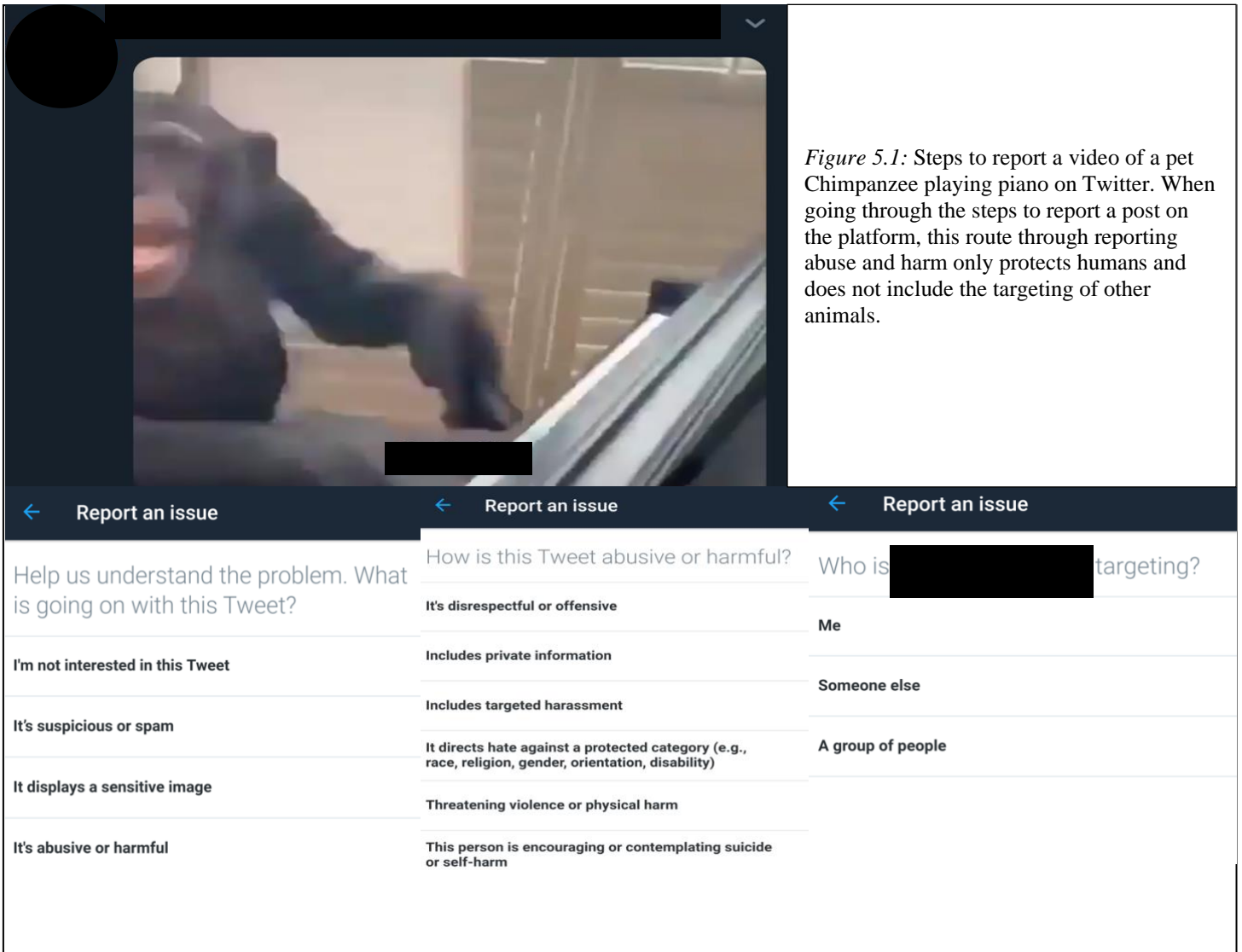
and are present in the scenario of accountability of posts advocating for the primate pet trade. Sanction-based accountability relates to the solution of having social media platform employees' moderate posts rather than users doing that through a reporting system. Trust-based accountability would be two situations; either having a reporting system for users or not having any posts at all which would not be realistic for the profitable market. The dynamic scenario would be the reporting system, or a compromise where people simply do not support content creators who are advertising and participating in the primate trade.

Taking responsibility can be seen as a double-sided struggle of morality depending on the type of accountability, becoming a form of governance. Within the various situations of accountability, there are also categories including mechanization, jurisdiction, and incentivized accountability. These can fall under dynamic forms of accountability. Governance of accountability includes the responsiveness versus the amenability of the situation (Bovens et al. 2014). Each category of accountability is based on the notion of promise. Mechanization is the promise of control, jurisdiction is justice, and incentivization is based on performance. Dynamic accountability would be using these three categories, prime for monitoring the primate trade online. The responsibilities of overseeing behaviors (mechanic), preventing undesirable behavior (jurisdiction), and influencing other behaviors (incentivized) are important parameters for monitoring online activities that inadvertently advertise illegal trade activities (Bovens et al. 2014).

While having a myriad of demographics online may make accountability measures uneven, as not everyone will be an active enforcer of removing imagery supporting the trade, visual accountability is becoming the main form of responsibility online. Using visuals to enforce accountability has been seen as a successful measure for encouraging responsibility

(Bovens et al. 2014). However, when it comes to attempts to report social media posts with imagery of pet primates, there is rarely a way to report said posts. While there are often choices to report posts supporting major illegal trade practices related to human trafficking, weapons, and drugs, there is still no spot to report the pet trade (see *fig. 5.1*).

Within the United States, legislation does not currently enforce the reporting of any illegal wildlife trade-related posts. Even though there are federal acts preventing the trade of non-human primates, posts online are still being shared. Federal laws need to address specifics of what supports the trade as well, such as these social media posts (Favre 2019). Even though there is controversy on animal rights within legislation and if it should be a global, rather than federal,



venture, there are many variables that support the trade that are being unaddressed in legislation (Cretois et al. 2019). Petitions are beginning to gain traction to prevent platform corporations from allowing these posts as law makers continue to forget this detail in legislation and law enforcement (“Petition: #PrimatesAreNotPets” 2019).

Media influence needs to be recognized by audiences as it becomes engrained in quotidian culture (Council on Communications and Media 2013). Social media supports the pet trade with overt posts of pet primates as well as “photo” tourism, where people pose with non-human primates that were illegally obtained, sometimes locally (Kemmerer 2012, 33). Without a complete knowledge of the trade, it is impossible to report posts such as these and keep them off social media platforms. As Instagram tourism continues onward, photographing wildlife ethically is of utmost importance through following laws, considering captive primate welfare, and captioning posts with honesty – such as where the image was taken (Groo 2019). Without honest captions, visually enticing posts may stem from harmful tourism practices.

Campaigning for Primates

Researching how tourism practices and the smuggling of primates for the pet trade can increase conservation efforts locally as well as empower people. Education of social media users liking posts only possible by those on-ground efforts to transport primates is of equal importance as when it comes to conservation “it’s not the animals [i]t’s people” that need to be the focus of today (Johnson 2014, 32). Throughout the summer of data collection, I found that while there were no notable spikes of posting and popularity correlating with the time of season, posts and popularity within specific hashtags including illegally traded primates were consistently being posted throughout the time of data collection. On a given day, there would be a chance of

someone scrolling through the hashtag or key terms seeing at least one post consisting of one of the two categories on the social media I analyzed.

While I did not collect a large sample size of data, this model of research being replicated and compared in the future would be beneficial at an attempt to find patterns of posts. Not only would this get a sense of the popularity of these kinds of posts, it could help further define the online culture circulating around non-human primates. Despite the small sample of data, social media can still be used to support efforts against the trade. Popular posts, for example, could be popular solely because of the amount of comments which could all be pointing out the negative aspects of the post (Nghiem, Webb, and Carrasco 2012). This aspect of posts should be further researched with this topic.

Post popularity is garnered through the notions of the cute and monstrous previously discussed. Aesthetically pleasing imagery that creates an “aww” response can be referred to as emotional design (Cheok 2010). This type of response evokes positivity and motivation, which could be some elements used in campaigning against the trade. Using tactics that advertise the trade can be an effective way to build an audience that wants to protect non-human primates. The effects of this communication are often on the scale of mass media, informed through people of similar opinion, influencers, then assimilated among influenced individuals. Ideally, for the purpose of promoting active internet usage, education through these tactics will garner an audience of agreement. Lasswell’s hypodermic media theory states that mass media communication of ideas is directly received and accepted by the intended demographic.

Through proper insemination of educational ideas, they can spread rapidly to intended targets successfully. However, digital media can be mediated in ways different from mass media leading to obstacles of proper influencers to reach out to (Melkote and Steeves 2001).

“[D]ifferent styles in presenting information can induce different responses among audience (...) [and] positive content of intervention information may strengthen environmentally-favorable behavior” (Wu et al. 2018, 76). By weaving together positive imagery with information of the trade – on prevention through social media as well as successes in the field – active public support against the pet trade can be garnered.

While buying advertisement spaces and promotions on social media could be an easy way to achieve this, influencer sponsorship would be a more personalized form of education to which audiences would be more attentive to. Social marketing is based on evaluating elements that influence the desired audiences already and using methods that would ultimately improve their behavioral well-being with the new message. The theory of reasoned action plays into this marketing by analyzing influencers’ actions and audiences’ behavioral intentions which can result in values and habits shifting as well (Melkote and Steeves 2001). In my personal experience, listening to a content creator who I trust advertising products and ideas makes me trust said products and ideas. Influencer sponsorship is essentially a new form of the celebrity spokesperson. As influencers are becoming increasingly considered celebrities due to the size of their audiences, their faces on brands are also considered a successful marketing strategy for advertisements (Zhou and Whitla 2013). Influencers are known through internet traffic, the same audiences that are more apt to come across primate-related media.

Influencers being sponsored by a non-profit campaign to spread information and educate the public on the pet trade online can be effective tool for preventing further support. However, scouting out influencers who are generally already trusted is a strategy that requires on ground personal experience with online platforms – as well as finding influencers who agree to talk about the content (Carelse 2019). In achieving behavioral change through social marketing with

the proper demographic influencers and brands, there can be a change in the perception of pet primates online. By incorporating a hashtag portion of the campaign, influencers would benefit greatly as well. By using “#freetobecute” in text and visual posts to show a stance against the primate pet trade, new audiences could trace the trend back to influencers that would bring them more profit. Since the campaign would be a non-profit initiative run by sponsorship, content creators could collaborate to incorporate the hashtag-phrase in their merchandise as well promoting the message while earning income.

However, while the sponsorship may be a successful route of education there is still a debate on if clicktivism is beneficial to activism. Ideally, if not liking posts does not support creators then they may not be apt to post images relating to pet primates, but they still own the primate unless otherwise reported and convinced to give up the animal. Information can spread through various news media, memes, and spectacle, but participation could be where the cause falters. When Harambe was a major debate, captivity conservation was a larger concern to social media users than conservation in the wild. Rarely did people pursue direct efforts to protect gorillas as a species; rather they used gorilla’s endangered status as a reason to give the Cincinnati Zoo poor PR (Mkono and Holder 2019). However, users were still giving an active perspective and voice to the situation, showing passion to the problem and educating others who did not understand the controversy of the incident.

Social media is all about activity. Constant reminders of the primate pet trade could also lead to activist burnout if done incorrectly. Activist burnout “is when the accumulated stress becomes associated with activism because it’s so debilitating” (Gorski, Lopresti-Goodman, and Rising 2019). While exhausting audiences with depressing information could prevent it from circulating online, there are methods to prevent this pathos. By keeping the movement organized

with strong, inclusive policy and having a commitment to the cause that is long-term, activist burnout can be prevented (Gorski, Lopresti-Goodman, and Rising 2019). Education-entertainment has been shown to result in favorable changes of behavior, knowledge and attitude towards the issue at hand (Melkote and Steeves 2001). Social media is everchanging and social activism that is successful leads to active memories of the cause, making users mindful of posts they support. Influencers sponsored by the campaign could be given creative freedom in their presentation of a loose script on the primate pet trade. Creative freedom sparks inspiration and passion for the subject which would keep listeners active and creators' content with the work. The top five most successful tactics for consumer outreach through social media is a brand, or influencer, being responsive, offering promotions, providing educational content, sharing visuals, and being funny (Chaffey 2019). By supporting influencer's creativity in content, who are also supporting the campaign, these tactics can be easily achieved in advertising against the trade. Social media is fluid and has less boundaries on content creativity as opposed to creating advertisements to market without influencer recognition.

Social media also has a positive influence on gender, especially in areas of the world where gender inequality is polarizing. These new forms of communication and information can empower women and allow for the creation of new communities (Curtis et al. 2010). The spread of information can heavily impact these social spaces in positive ways. Campaigns also give people who may not have a chance to speak in public spaces, a chance to feel empowered in online public spaces (Burrow and Rainone 2017). Clicktivism is a powerful tool and has also been increasingly relevant in U.S. politics (Halupka 2014).

Conclusion

Clicktivism will continue to become important in education and information as technology continues to be engrained in various cultures. While there may be reactions similar to the Harambe case, making a topic trending such as the online presence of the pet trade will not result in less support for conservation efforts. Viewers can be active participants of conservation through their phones and computers. Through collaboration with online influencers, social media users have the power to move towards content that supports a for primates' platform.

CONCLUSION

“I’d like to take him home and just...just keep him as a pet, but that’s not what he’s meant to be.

He’s meant to be free, free.” – Bob Ross

While a myriad of posts portraying non-human primates in unethical situations can be found among the surface of the web, social media content is built up by the people, not the companies that founded and maintenance the platforms. Social media users have had the power to start up and fuel many social movements in the 2010’s with a lasting impact including: the Egyptian Revolution, Black Lives Matter (BLM), #LoveWins and #MeToo. Users have the power to prevent supporting posts, of content creators, and other advertisers. The push for a better system to reporting the primate trade is needed on all social media platforms, but until then, people have the ability to shake down the presence of the trade.

Through education campaigns, and ignoring posts, the pet trade can lose some of its’ economic value and non-human primates can be given mass intrinsic support within their native habitats – safe and free. Black markets with a deep history of representation and support may never disband, but, when given a chance to prevent their power from growing, no matter how small the action may seem, it’s of great value.

In the era of hashtag revolutions, individual voices can lead to community empowerment and new cultural views of non-human primates. A culture where wild animals are free to be cute.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Search Terms Used

Search Terms Used	
Social Media Platform	Terms Used
Instagram	#animals, #cuteanimals, #monkey, #monkeys, #primates
YouTube	“cute monkeys”, “lemurs”, “monkeys”, “primates”,
Twitter	“cute monkeys”, “monkeys”, “primates”
Reddit	“r/aww”, “r/monkeys”

Appendix B: Figure 6

Section 1: Cute

Trickster

Meaningful:

- i. *Madagascar* (2005): The representation of lemurs is as carefree and aloof party animals in this film. However, they fall under the category trickster as they used the main protagonists as protection from the fossa predators, deceiving them by not actually welcoming them into their system but rather using them as a barrier. This film also had sequels.
- ii. *The Simpsons* (1989): Mr. Teeny is a repeated side character and pet of Krusty the Clown in the show. He is often seen performing tricks or doing work for Krusty such as driving. He is usually smoking and seen as a replaceable friend to Krusty.
- iii. *Pirates of the Caribbean* (2003): Jack the monkey is a sidekick of the antagonist of the film, often thieving or deceiving the pirates, always following through with the requests given to him. This film also had sequels.
- iv. *Camp Lazlo* (2004): The protagonist of the TV show, Lazlo the spider monkey was always thinking out of the box at his summer camp and getting into mischief. In the end, everything would go back to normal for everyone but the camp counselor and one other camper – but the rest of the camp admired his ideas.
- v. *Speed Racer* (1967): Chim Chim was the sidekick of Speed Racer and would often take commands literally leading to comedic relief as well as

mistakes and accidents that would further the plot at the expense of other characters but would never purposefully harm anyone. There was also a film adaptation of the series.

Authored:

- i. *Friends* (1994): Marcel is a rescued laboratory capuchin who constantly ignores Ross and does as he wishes around the apartment; however, when being watched by others he is often well behaved.
- ii. *Night at the Museum* (2006): Dexter the capuchin is constantly teasing and playing tricks on the night guard, such as stealing keys and biting him. This film also had a sequel.
- iii. *Rio* (2011): Marmosets were a group of side characters in this movie that were both played as comedic villains as well as a group of thieves in a playful manner.

Continuous:

- i. *Bojack Horseman* (2014): The lemurs of the show are always background characters and are always seen at parties. They are destructive and interact with main characters from time to time without any speaking roles, but still furthering the plot.

Educator

Meaningful:

- i. *The Wild Thornberry's* (1998): In this television show, a chimpanzee accompanies a family of wildlife researchers. He is often reading and has a sophisticated tone. He is always by the side of the main protagonist, Eliza, as they explore the new environment.
- ii. *Tuca and Bertie* (2019): An unnamed primate had gone on a date with one of the protagonists, Tuca, in an episode as a lesson to her on how to date. The two of them were compatible but the protagonist could not figure out how to handle being with someone she actually connected with.
- iii. *Curious George* (1939, 2006): A series of books, television shows, and movies on a chimpanzee who explores the human world as a way to educate younger children on everyday aspects of life such as traffic lights and sharing.
- iv. *Dora the Explorer* (2000): Boots the Monkey was a co-teacher for this children's television show as well as Dora's best friend and companion.
- v. *Madagascar* (2005): The chimpanzees at the New York zoo fall under this category since, unlike the lemurs, they are both a source of information and possess the ability to read and comprehend English.

Authored:

- i. *Tarzan* (1918): The original Tarzan was written and filmed as a way to understand the construct of the human-man and their power in the environment.

Continuous:

- i. *The Lion King* (1994): Rafiki is a shaman character who connects fate and ancestry as ways to help lead Simba back to the pride to save other lions from Scar. This film also had sequels.

- ii. *Zoboomafoo* (1999): A sifaka lemur character who was a companion to the Kratt Brothers as they explored the animal kingdom. Both a real life sifaka and a robotic one was used on set which conveys a sense of coming to and from reality for educational purposes.

Beauty

Meaningful:

- i. *Kung Fu Panda* (2008): Monkey is one of the heroic idols of the village, and the main protagonist who looks up to him and sees him as an untouchable, indestructible character. However, through the final battle, Po begins to form a friendship with Monkey and seeing him as a teammate makes him idolize Monkey more. This film had sequels.
- ii. *Sing* (2016): The son of a gorilla gang in this film is conveyed as an artistic figure who does not want to be involved in fighting but would rather keep a relationship with music than with his abrasive father. The story explores their father-son relationship.

Authored:

- i. None found in the analysis.

Continuous:

- i. *Bush Baby, Little Angel of the Grasslands* (1992): A galago is depicted as a companion to the protagonist who is exploring African wildlife. The galago is a mirror of her curiosity and the link between nature and humans.

Existence

Meaningful:

- i. *Every Which Way but Loose* (1978): Clyde the orangutan is the best friend to the protagonist and is around to be a shoulder to lean on and help in both plot and comedic effect. This film also had a sequel.
- ii. *Indiana Jones* (1981): A capuchin was used in this film as a villain and the film makers had him be the third eye for the main antagonist.
- iii. *Life of Pi* (2012): The orangutan was a representation of Pi's mother and represented the good in the world that is the nature of humans.

Authored:

- i. *Tarzan* (1999): The Disney version of the narrative had gorillas represent the kindness in humans as well as fear of humans. Tarzan was the link between the two species and savior of gorillas, becoming the troop leader.
- ii. *Indiana Jones* (1984): The capuchin in this sequel sacrifices itself to protect Indiana Jones, representing self-sacrifice and agency in choice, reflecting both humanity and nature.

Continuous:

- i. *George of the Jungle* (1997): Similar to Tarzan, the gorillas represent a voice of nature and navigation of the environment.

Section 2: Monstrous

Death

Meaningful:

- i. *Princess Iron Fan* (1941): The Monkey King of this film is a rendition of the original epic's trickster. He chases after the Princess for her fan, trying to kill her at one point for it.

Authored:

- i. *Power Puff Girls* (1998): The villain, Mojo Jojo is always moving the plot along by trying to destroy the town and people within it, as well as the protagonists, the Power Puff girls.
- ii. *Monkey Paw* (1902): A novel and film (later) about a superstition of a monkey's paw bending down its' fingers to grant wishes. The primate who grants the wish has ultimate control over the fate and meaning and it cannot be reversed.

Continuous:

- i. None found in Analysis.

Vulnerability

Meaningful:

- i. *King Kong* (1933): The representation of both human and masculine identity being rooted in the older ideal of primal possession as displayed through a gorilla. The Kong's desire is his demise and to display the woman he kidnapped as possession to the world was his downfall, as to be uncivilized yet being seen as a man and monster.
- ii. *Kim Possible* (2002): Bobo the chimp was a primate character at a summer camp one of the protagonists, Ron Stoppable, attended. This chimp had been an extreme menace to Ron to the point Ron developed a phobia towards chimpanzees. Bobo the chimp represents actions that can be seen as childish or playful having the power to create negative vulnerability within others.

Authored:

- i. *Sing* (2016): The gorilla gang falls under monstrous rather than cute as they push to commit crimes but are also vulnerable by the law and from the son not giving it his all and having them almost being caught multiple times.
- ii. *Family Guy* (1999): The evil monkey that lives in a closet represents the vulnerability for the son Chris as the monkey constantly terrifies and taunts him.

Continuous:

- i. *Rampage* (2018): A gorilla undergoes medical treatment that leads to them being completely out of control of their own mentality and leads them onto a rampage out of pain and suffering.
- ii. *Monkey Shines* (1988): After receiving an injection, a capuchin monkey begins to feel all the negative emotions of their guardian and takes it out on others in violent matters out of a lack of control.

Ornamental

Meaningful:

- i. None found in the analysis.

Authored:

- i. *Ace Ventura* (1994, 1995): Both films use primates, a capuchin and a gorilla, as comedic and cruel. Ornamentalism is the artful playfulness of cruelty and the primates result in harming the protagonists as a device to be comedic for the audience.
- ii. *The Secret Life of Pets 2* (2019): A circus monkey antagonist is part of a major fight scene in where they had the upper hand in slapstick-esque attacks but ultimately lose and are harmed by being thrown off the train much to the excitement of the protagonist. The cruelty inflicted comes back as a form of karma.

Continuous:

- i. *Dexter's Laboratory* (1996): Monkey is a superhero whose powerful ideas in saving the town always result in his near-death experiences, otherwise he is always being overpowered by the villain of the fight.

Existence

Meaningful:

- i. *I am Weasel* (1997): The character "I R Baboon" of this children's show represents the stereotype of a stupid baboon in relation to his friend and other protagonist of the show "I AM Weasel" who is famously intelligent. Baboon represents the existence of prior primates in a negative, stereotyped fashion, while humans are fans of Weasel for his intelligence.
- ii. *Great Grape Ape* (1975): "So be sure he's your friend" is one of the lines of the title sequence of this older television show. The Grape Ape is a giant gorilla who, in doing good deeds, is still considered monstrous for his size and uncontrolled destruction wherever he goes.
- iii. *Aladdin* (1992): Abu the monkey companion to Aladdin exists as a kleptomaniac mirror to how Aladdin is viewed by others in the kingdom. Abu represents the relationship between have-nots and thieves and how societal stigmas can create realities of stereotypes.

Authored:

- i. *Planet of the Apes* (1968): This film and novel represents non-human primates as naturally power hungry and domineering, having agency over the teleologically "advanced" human.
- ii. *Jungle Book* (1967): King Louis in the Disney adaptation represents the quest for human behavior and power which leads to chaos and corruption in power dynamics in the jungle.
- iii. *Lancelot Link: Secret Chimp* (1970): The British television show ad-libbed chimpanzees conversing and had them going on detective missions as part of the plot in which the main chimpanzee agents are still heavily problematic and often are characters based on scandal and corruption compared to their often racially stereotyped antagonists.

Continuous:

- i. *Lady and the Tramp* (1955): In a short scene the Tramp refers to apes' as "too closely related to humans". In this narrative the non-human primate is a link to humans in the perspective of dogs.

Appendix C: Figure 8

Many of the popular primate-related memes that have circulated in the 2010's includes depictions of non-human primates that are either in the pet trade or incite discussions on the well-being of species depicted. However, without consistent discussion this leads to further reposting of imagery that advertises the primate pet trade.

(a) Darwin the monkey: A monkey wondering around a Toronto IKEA in a winter coat debuted earlier in the 2010's online resulted in the owner giving the primate away to a sanctuary. There were overwhelmingly positive responses to the meme itself out of its' cute factor so the result in giving Darwin a new home was not a major headliner despite being the right action to do.

(b) Harambe the gorilla: The death of a captive endangered ape to protect the life of a child who had fallen into his enclosure, Harambe resulted in major backlash online. Gorillas are charismatic mascots for conservation and so the knowledge of their conservation status is better known than for Darwin's case. The death of the gorilla resulted in memes featuring the text "R.I.P Harambe", viewers and creators remarking that the gorilla as a close friend and icon – even songs were written in solidarity.

(c) Monkey getting a haircut: A video of a monkey receiving a haircut from a hairdresser became viral for a short period and received instant response from primatologists in major news media but was nonetheless still shared by those who found it to be amusing content and was often remarked as "relatable content".

(d) Baboon using technology: A series of gifs filmed by a stock-photographer have continuously circulated online. The files have baboons using computers and telephones while sitting in a staged office setting showing ultimate forms of anthropomorphism. These often circulate as reaction gifs, accompanying text posts and are infrequently but commonly shared on apps such as Twitter and through text messages.

(e) "Ok so basically I'm monkey": This phrase accompanies many images and is also used as a response in text, not always attached to the image shown with King Kong. It is a popular meme to use in response to actions that can be stereotyped to be "primate-like" such as eating bananas or seeing videos such as a monkey riding a motorcycle which is further promoting the pet trade.

(f) A macaque taking a selfie: This image created major debate on understanding copyright and human ownership, falling into the discourse of legislation focused on in Chapter 1. However, this was mostly shared out of fascination of a monkey taking a selfie and sometimes even had the "ok so basically I'm monkey" meme as a response.

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