

## A

### **A beginning to no end**

In this glossary I start to grapple with a tension that haunts me. This glossary is interspersed, discontinuous, and broken; yet it aims to be coherent<sup>1</sup>. It is not complete and yet not incomplete, the glossary stands ready to be tweaked, edited and lengthened. I do not aim to give a complete picture but a beginning from which to continue reflection<sup>2</sup>. Zooming into particulars and zooming out to the abstract, I work through my memories, hauntings, and emotions to illuminate the tension between freedom and justice. Having witnessed many years of Bakr-Eid in Benson Town, Bangalore, I inhabited a place amongst the seasonal sale of goats for sacrifice<sup>3</sup>.

But, each one of the goats were individual lives. Those lives are lost forever. Their ghosts haunt me with sounds of bleating. Yet, Bakr-Eid is an important festival, central to the identities of so many people I love and care about.

The festival of Bakr-Eid creates a system in which caring for the participants necessarily privileges the humans over the nonhuman goat being sacrificed. My inability to categorize the goats' deaths as 'killing' or an 'offering' significant to muslim identities, leaves me unresolved. Our identities matter, but so do the goats'. Maybe resolution is overrated, but I find myself pulled in opposing directions, losing a grip on my own stance.

This glossary is a process through which I will grapple with how we distribute our care, our respect, and our empathy to different lives. This reflection is not a choice. It is forced by the ghosts that haunt us– that haunt me. The ghosts of witnessing, experiencing, knowing; each producing more ghosts that call for my attention.

### **Attention**

Who do we attend to? Why?

*What is ignored will always haunt, come back; seeking attention.*

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<sup>1</sup> I chose the format of a glossary to allow my writing to reflect the randomness of everyday life. We are not focussed but distracted, affected by different things in different moments. I draw on Taussig's analysis of everyday life. My paper works in resistance to the assumption of a "contemplative individual when it should, instead, assume a distracted collective reading with what I call, by way of shorthand, a tactile eye" (Taussig 1991, 352). The alphabetized format of a glossary also serves to allow my readers to begin their exploration anywhere, allowing each term to serve as an opening into further thought and feeling. The intentionality of the ordering of terms in the glossary further enables this distracted reading.

<sup>2</sup> Like compost, this glossary works with the idea of "ontological dynamism" - a constant becoming in which ontology is unstable (Langwick, 2018, 431). Then, the glossary depicts a cyclical knowledge where the we end with a beginning, but a *new* beginning, to explore the tension between nonhuman killability and religious sacrifice.

<sup>3</sup> Benson town is a primarily Muslim neighbourhood. I can hear the bleating from anywhere in my home during Eid.

## **Animal**

The animal has been a purposefully created category that serves as the ontological opposition to the category of human. The animal then represents the “abject opposite” of the human. How arbitrary to have a single category of animal when each species is exceptionally unique! We separate our own animality from our identity to create the animal other. We must reflect on this distinction, its utility and its implications. ‘Human’ has been defined as a rich, white, cis-gendered, heterosexual male since it was defined by the same<sup>4</sup>. Prioritizing humans, those we know best, means that every degree of separation from that definition renders that life less worthy. The animal is at the bottom of the spectrum of hierarchical valuation due to our limited circle of moral consideration. Our identities as humans and the things that morph them are significant and irreplaceable, but nonhuman identities are also significant in that they are alive and unique. Still most of us fail to recognize and acknowledge their lives.

While the academic understanding of animal is useful, it doesn’t capture nonhuman animals. Each is special. I think of my canine friends, Michi and Boo, and Lou my rabbit friend. They exude life<sup>5</sup>. They are different, but there is intelligence in their difference. Their emotions are recognizable, inviting empathy. I believe that the term animal just indicates a form of life. *Where there is life there is unique beauty.*

How do I care for individuals who seem to have opposing interests?

## **Autonomy**

Asserting autonomy is a privilege. In order to be able to exercise our agency, we require a conducive space, supportive others, and individual confidence in ourselves. It is difficult for me, an able bodied, cis-gendered, economically stable female, to assert myself and my choices. I am privileged, yet I feel the need to justify my existence. When a space that values all lives equitably is unavailable, I see my responsibility to use the privileges available to me. I must take care to recognize the ways in which nonhuman beings assert their agency and communicate their needs and desires.

A resistance *with* them, not *for* them.

It may seem that autonomy is individualistic, an assertion of individual independence, however, everyday we choose to be compelled by other forces. These forces may be people we feel strongly about, visions that are personally significant, or anything that holds our faith. Religion is compelling - *our belief creates our truth*. Religion is a choice, and the assertion of that choice is autonomous<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Ko and Ko 2017, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Though difficult to prove nonhuman agency and mindedness, I invite you to consider J.K Gibson Graham’s proposition of weak theory, which acknowledges embodiment and affect as modes of knowing. (Gibson-Graham 2006, 7-8).

<sup>6</sup> It is funny that we think that religion strips us of our independence when we choose to be governed by the ‘secular’ rules of our governments even when we do not agree with their policies.

## B

### **Bakr Eid**

‘Bakr’ means goat in Hindi. The festival of Bakr-Eid is a celebration of Abraham’s faith in Allah as he mercifully allows Abraham to sacrifice a lamb instead of his son, Ishmael. After the sacrifice, the goat *becomes* food. A food blessed by Allah to save his followers. The festival also serves as an outreach, a time to share food with all – friends, family and the hungry.<sup>7</sup> This is a festival that brings people together, challenging the class divisions in society. A collective identity in Islamic faith.

For many practicing Muslims, Bakr-Eid is a mark of their identity. It reinforces their sense of selves as faithful, disciplined, and charitable<sup>8</sup>.

### **Balance**

How do we find a balance between freedom and justice? Do we privilege the people or the nonhumans? Balance is important to me because I believe that life does not have hierarchical worth. Life is inherently valuable and each life may choose the values to direct their lives. *What happens when different lives have clashing values?* The ghost of idealism and balance lurk by me, everyday, guiding my actions. They witness and grow until I cannot but give them my attention.

I understand both perspectives, *or at least I try.*

The goat: overpowered to be sacrificed, who values the continuation of their own life without suffering. An almost universal desire that most of us empathize with. The right to live.

On the other hand, Muslims: Muslims practice Bakr-Eid as an act of faith – to honor Abraham’s faith in Allah to keep his promise of giving Abraham a great nation of descendants in spite of asking for the sacrifice of his son, Ishmael. For my Muslim friends, this is a day of celebrating Abraham’s faith and, through this, their own faith in Allah. They recognize the death of the goat. A death sanctioned by Allah, who is the omnipotent, all knowledgeable and the enlightened guide of the universe. This is significant to their religious identity and, based on the degree of their religiousness, possibly a privileged aspect of their identities too.

Here lies the tension and thus I feel torn. I must find a way to extend my understanding to both, the goats and the Muslims practicing Bakr-Eid.

I am inclined to see fellow humans as able to understand the moral implications of taking a life when religion is at least in part a social construction. Some may note the difference between

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<sup>7</sup> A third of the sacrificed animal, the always nonhuman ‘adhiya’, is distributed to homeless and poor people on the streets, a third is distributed to friends, neighbors and extended family, and a third is kept for the particular family to eat themselves.

<sup>8</sup> Identity is constructed and moulded by experiences, creating a sense of self that we need in order to navigate our neoliberal world. Much existential anxiety is about identity, such that we must recognize identity as significant to our lives, experiences, bodies, and mental health.

the right to live as a priority over the right to practice a festival that is only a part of their lives. Yet, this might be an imposition on their identities.

### **But why ‘I’?**

I write this glossary in first-person singular to make my vulnerabilities accessible. They serve as primary indicators to understanding the world around me. I aim to make this glossary personal and bring ‘you’, my readers, into my writing to allow you to find your personal story within it. At times I use ‘you’ to speak to the nonhuman animals present in my exploration. Sometimes, ‘you’ refers to the ever-present ghosts that facilitate this glossary. The multiple uses of ‘you’ might affect every reader differently. This might lead to the necessary confusion between the reader, the nonhuman beings, and ghosts, in order to situate the reader in a position to empathize with the others<sup>9</sup>.

## **C**

### **Childhood**

I live in a Muslim neighborhood in Bangalore, ironically named ‘Benson Town’<sup>10</sup>. Every year I witnessed Bakr-Eid; I witnessed two conflicting narratives. This conflict is the birth of this Glossary.

I know Bakr-Eid is approaching when I am stuck on Nandidurga Road for 45 minutes, a significant connecting road 5 minutes away by foot. Hundreds, if not thousands, of goats line the pavements outnumbering the cars or people that make the traffic. They are marked with different colours to indicate different owners. *As if lives can be owned*. Just like coconuts, goats are sold alive on the road with people coming up to the ‘vendors’ bargaining lower prices for the ownership of a priceless life. The goats bleat in desperation, calling attention to their captivity for slaughter, only to see that people are not interested in what they have to say. They are ignored, nameless, but their bodies remain ever present. Their cries haunt me as I travel back home, they stay with me, only to be intensified with more goats’ cries from neighboring houses. I am hurting for the goats, but not in comparison to the goats themselves.

*My pain is privileged. My pain is secondary. My pain can have a future.*

Life does not occur in isolation. I grew up around Muslim friends - necessarily entangled in each others’ lives.

Faizan lives two streets down from me. We went through 10 years of school together, he is still a dear friend. Faizan’s mother is religious and spends an entire day preparing for Bakr-Eid.

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<sup>9</sup> Empathy is an interesting tool in understanding. If not carefully practiced, empathy can also be violent - an assumption of complete knowledge of the other. I invite readers to refer to *Entangled Empathy* by Lori Gruen for more on empathy and its various forms. In this glossary, I hope for readers to shift their perspective through out, perhaps even re-read certain terms through different lenses using different tools (like empathy).

<sup>10</sup> The name Benson Town came from British colonization. The English name unsuccessfully seeks to represent a neighbourhood of Indians - here primarily muslim indians.

She cooks, hosts and distributes specially made Biryani on Eid. Their whole family comes together to pray. They all take on different responsibilities for the day. They open their homes to visitors, each of whom will be cared for and fed. Faizan's family awaits Bakr-Eid annually to celebrate their faith through a supportive community tradition<sup>11</sup>. *Bakr Eid makes them so happy!*

My childhood shapes my identity and the ghosts that come along.

### **Complicit**

We are all complicit in some forms of violence, consciously and unconsciously. It seems to be the nature of life – trade-offs. We are limited and thus our attention is limited. We attend to the ghosts that are prevalent in relation to our lives at the moment of attention.

I am complicit, even though I don't kill the goat myself, identify as a Muslim, or attend the Bakr Eid ceremony. I am part of the system that allows nonhuman animal lives to be perceived as replaceable. I am complicit when I do not express my witnessing of the goat's suffering. I am complicit even when I do, for then I am complicit in the pain and invalidation of another. The ghosts of my care for nonhuman beings usurp my attention, while the ghosts of religion and family haunt another. We are all complicit, yet we are all capable of awareness.

### **Condescension**

Who am I to feel morally superior to others who are violent toward nonhuman animals when I am complicit in so many forms of violence?

### **Community**

Religion and religious traditions create community. The feeling of belonging is integral to Bakr Eid. Eid is a time for people to come together and feel supported by others with similar beliefs. Community resists the oppressive emphasis on independence as a value. Independence is a false belief that cannot exist given that we are constantly intra-acting<sup>12</sup> with all that is physically external to us. We are affected by our environment. How would we survive in isolation without plant beings to sustain life, bees to pollinate, and friends and family to support us?

**D**

**E**

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<sup>11</sup> I speak only briefly of Faizan and his family because they are not my experiences. Yet, I take the liberty to speak with Faizan's permission. My instinct to empathize with the goats is directly oppositional to my understanding and appreciating Faizan's family's experience.

<sup>12</sup> I borrow Barad's term 'intra-action' to challenge the assumption of an a priori distinctness of beings. (Barad 2008, 139)

## **Entanglement**

“Domination, domestication, and love are deeply entangled<sup>13</sup>. Home is where dependencies within and among species reach their most stifling.”<sup>14</sup>

## **Empathy**

Empathy is complex. We value it, but the extent ebbs and flows. Empathy is reserved for some and not others based on our values and backgrounds. It is required that we shut out empathy toward the goats of Bakr Eid to be able to sacrifice them or even eat them regularly. Yet the ghost of the goats loom in the background waiting to be attended to. Their blood escaping their body carries the memory of their life, lost suddenly. They are immediately present in the absence of their lives<sup>15</sup>.

Empathy seems stronger in times of difficulty. But, empathy must not be colonized by negative emotions. Empathizing with the joy of Allah’s care and the community of joy built around Eid is significant in recognizing our necessary entanglements with all<sup>16</sup>. In witnessing the experience of celebrating Bakr-Eid through my friends’ eyes, I obscure our seemingly distinct beings and take on their joy. Still, my empathy is never absolute. I cannot forget the goats.

## **F**

### **Food for who?**

How were you turned to food? Your wide eyes sparkling with excitement to eat the next thing you see; your quick movements indicate your intentional agency. At what point did your body transform into a commodity to be consumed and used by anyone other than yourself? Did you realize the moment that your body was reduced and stripped in distinction to your now apparently non-existent mind? You have been taken captive, made dependent on the likes of me to provide your daily sustenance. But, only to keep you alive until you may be sold for sacrifice. Sold so your dead carcass may alleviate the pains of humans and sit beautifully disguised on the dinner table. Disguised so we can stomach your meat. When did our sins become your burden? Who’s God transformed your reality? Was it your God?

Your life has more purpose than to be used by us, but we choose to ignore you.

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<sup>13</sup> By entanglement I mean that everything is neither purely cause nor purely effect, but deeply intertwined as embodied identities that are *of* the environment, as the substance of ourselves. We humans are then never a rigidly bounded entity, but an always vulnerable and relational being that necessarily becomes with our environment (Alaimo 2010, 28; Haraway 2016, 34; Barad 2008, 139)

<sup>14</sup> Tsing 2012, 141. For me, home is the place that brings most of my ghosts because I am so familiarized. I am familiarized to the extent that I cannot but reflect and think of the complicated dependencies that exist. Thus this glossary, one of my hauntings.

<sup>15</sup> I draw on Fineman’s idea of absent presence through materiality. (Fineman 2016, 14)

<sup>16</sup> Using Barad and Haraway’s understanding of entanglement, I bring attention to the continuities of the self with our environments consisting of other humans, nonhumans, plants, and materials.

## **Festival**

Festivals in India are celebrated with fervor. They play a large role in creating, maintaining, and healing relationships with others and ourselves. Depending on the festival, different sacred rituals take place, creating specific energies to commemorate the significance of the festival. There is something gripping about collective prayer. It is as if collective faith in anything becomes potent with the power to affect us, though how we are affected varies individually.

The collective chants of priests performing a puja captures my attention. At once, I recognize the change in my energy because the space is now a place – a place that is now mine. The feeling of reconnecting to ourselves and our loved ones by sharing an intangible feeling cannot be articulated, though I try. Festivals are important to us, they shape us and our environments everyday.

## **G**

### **Ghosts**

Ghosts are everywhere, omnipresent, waiting, lingering. Anything can haunt – emotions, experiences, concepts, thoughts, people or memories. They are scary, difficult. They haunt me, never leaving me, only fluctuating in intensity. They force me to recognize all the things I want to ignore. All the things I know subconsciously but deny my attention. Attending to ghosts is scary, it reflects my neglect. Yet neglect is all I can give. I have been trying to pay more attention to my ghosts that shape me– perhaps, more than most external and visible things. It shows me the path to take forward, acknowledging the reality of our lives. But I need to be guided to my ghosts, slowly unraveling each part of the puzzle that makes a larger perspective. Only they can guide me, motivate me, and inspire me in my actions. Yet I don't mean to romanticize my ghosts. I need them to leave me, but their presence can never be forgotten for the contribution they make to my identity, to me.

### **Gift of Allah**

*“you say a prayer of thanks and accept the gift of meal you have been given. To think about the animals' suffering, she said, is to find fault with the gift, to cast doubt... To do this is to run the risk of giving offense and never receiving such a gift again”<sup>17</sup>*

A gift is reciprocal. *There is no free gift.* Gifts are a mode of exchange that build and maintain relationships. The reciprocity need not be physical. A relational reciprocity is necessary for gift giving and receiving. It is disrespectful to refuse a gift as it signifies a refusal of the relationship with the gift giver<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Nadasdy 2007, 27.

<sup>18</sup> Douglas, forward to *The Gift* 1966, xii.

The goat sacrificed is seen as a gift from Allah. There is compulsion to sacrifice the life. *Helplessness.*

Allah is God. Allah is all knowing, omnipotent, and benevolent. Allah doesn't make mistakes. If at all, we perceive mistakenly. When you rest your faith in Allah, he holds your future (during and after life) in his hands. To refuse his gift is to risk offending the most powerful existence upon which you are dependent. It is an act of disavowing your God, possibly seen as severing your relationship with Allah.

Do practicing Muslims have a *choice* in sacrificing a goat?

## H

### Haunting

Ghostly time is not linear. The past becomes imminently present. Ghosts remain with us, ever ready to be realized. Anything that haunts is intimately animate. To recognize haunting is to recognize the intentions of the ghost that haunts. Haunting may only diminish with attention and attention requires regard for the ghost. We ought to embrace the animation of our ghosts because “we need to be more in touch with the nature of how ‘the pieces of a world...littered all over a sociological landscape’ [intra-act]...This means that we will have to learn to talk to and listen to ghosts, rather than banish them”<sup>19</sup> Banishing ghosts is exactly why they exist. Ghosts feed on ignorance, the more we ignore them, the stronger they get, the more they haunt. Yet, ghosts are not distinct from us, they make us and we make them. We are inseparable.

### Hope

What do you hope for when desires for different beings necessarily clash? To hope we need a vision, something like an obtainable ideal rooted in our current context. However, I am lost for direction when I see both nonhuman animals and Muslims as extensions of myself. When I hope for a multispecies future, the presence or absence of Bakr-Eid are both troubling. Any hope, then, violates an aspect of me. Still, I have hope. I have hope to be able to hope, even if only ambiguously.

### Human

Here I refer you back to the term ‘animal’ to challenge the definition of human as primary to animal. What might it mean for us to start by defining the animal and then working toward an understanding of the human? This exercise might render new and different results, leading to a possibly less privileged idea of the human.

Still, we fail to realize that humans *are* animals.

## I

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<sup>19</sup> Gordon 1997, 22,23.



## **Inaction**

“Purity is not an option”<sup>20</sup>

The lack of achieving an ideal is not an excuse for inaction. For years I have felt stumped, unable to do anything about all the violence I witnessed in the world.

I dread making decisions because my mind is unable to pick a side. Internally, I go through every option and validate all of them from their respective perspectives. This means also validating opposing sides of the same situation. These tensions enveloped me to the extent of incapacitating me. Who am I if I am not able to take a stance?

Shotwell reminds us that the ideal, pure world is a myth, unattainable, because it never existed. Then, an ideal is in itself a mythical barrier we erect to justify our ignorance through inaction. Still, to act we need to be guided by a vision. Maybe this means we must revisit our priorities and do what we can to alleviate pain that we can access without imposition. It is naïve to think that we can achieve peace and equity in its absoluteness. Perhaps there are enough people with different interests to work and protect all forms of life. I must trust that there are others who will do what I cannot, and thus take limited yet constructive action that is accessible to me.

## **India**

In India, we worship cows but slaughter them for food and torture them for profits<sup>21</sup>. We live together with people of different religions, languages and beliefs, but we have not found harmony with nonhuman beings.

Meat is deeply religious in the Indian subcontinent. Everyone is acutely aware that muslims don't eat pork and hindus don't eat beef - or at least they aren't *supposed* to.

After the rise of BJP<sup>22</sup> under Prime Minister Modi, an all India beef ban was proposed and passed in several states under the guise of care for cows. While my animal welfare activist identity is tempted to be satisfied, my relationality prevents my satisfaction. The beef ban was a targeted blow toward muslims in india - a tacit message that India is Hindu. Muslims are now framed as anti-nationalist when they eat beef, but India is still seen as 'secular'.

## **J**

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<sup>20</sup> Shotwell 2016, 81.

<sup>21</sup> It is a common misconception that Hindus, or at least Brahmins do not eat meat. Everyone practices religion differently.

<sup>22</sup> Bharatiya Janata Party is a right wing political party in India.

## Justice

Justice and freedom seem to be opposing forces, each stepping on the other's toes. Yet, justice ceases to have moral relevance when there is no freedom<sup>23</sup>. If everything is determined and we have no power to create change, then we cannot be blamed for the outcome.

If we think of the choice to be compelled by religious faith as different but not distinct from the choice to participate in Bakr-Eid, then participating in the festival is no longer a choice. Bakr-Eid is then a necessary tradition that reminds people of Allah's goodness and reinvigorates their faith in Him.

***That individual Muslims or the Islamic community is not blamed for 'killing' goats annually is extremely important.***

In a world where Islam is painted as a violent religion, rendering all Muslims perceivably violent, it is integral to remind ourselves of the intentional construction of this image and who it serves. It is easy to use the stereotype, blame them, and feel more at peace by locating blame externally. But, it is unjust to betray the truth for our own convenience.

Instead, we may question the origins of the practice and which values contributed to the creation of the tradition of animal sacrifice. If we find that it is only the matter of sacrificing, then perhaps we can find other meaningful things to show faith in different methods of sacrifice.

## K

## L

## Life

While meat commonly works to de-animalize the food, hiding the nonhuman animal's liveliness, Bakr-Eid necessitates the sacrifice of *life*. The goat's life is necessary for the sacrifice, symbolically saving Muslims. Eid attends to the life such that it respects the life taken. Muslims are *thankful* for the goat, they see the goat as a gift from God.

## M

## Method

*"The mood and mode of killing matters"<sup>24</sup>*

There is no moral resolution to this tension. Mood and mode of a 'killing' has the power to transform its nature into a 'sacrifice'. We must attend to this difference.

Sacrifice shows evidence of respect for those whose lives we *must* take. *Compulsion takes the place of malice.*

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<sup>23</sup> Kant 1981, 431.

<sup>24</sup> Singh and Dave 2015, 245.

## **Misunderstood**

“As I’ve matured into an adult, I’ve had to deal with the moral conflict that comes with being non vegetarian. Coming from an Indian Muslim family essentially every meal that I eat has some sort of meat in it. It’s such a part of the Muslim culture to love meat. This is why whenever I have proposed to my family that I intend on perhaps becoming vegetarian some day they actually cannot understand where I am coming from. The idea seems so far off from what they are used to that they feel like I’m just being silly or acting childish. I am really just becoming re-sensitized to animal violence.”

--*Faizan Siwani*

## **N**

### **Nameless**

Notice the references to all the nonhuman beings in this glossary. I regularly over generalize a variety of flourishing and unique species into ‘nonhuman beings’ or ‘goats’ – maintaining the anthropocentric generalizations of their individualities. English is limited by the in-built arrogance of privileging humanity in the language. There are no words to refer to nonhuman beings as vast category that incorporates a multitude of different species and acknowledges their agency. I cannot even refer to these beings’ names because I do not know them. All the nonhuman beings I refer to in this glossary remain nameless, not intentionally, but because they were never regarded as lives that mattered. Names indicate regard for their unique identities, they command attention. The goats, that I constantly refer to as ‘the goats’ remain nameless to you and me. Even if they were named at some point, their names weren’t deemed important enough to communicate. By bringing attention to this lack, I hope to bring attention to their lives, challenging their namelessness.

Yet, naming remains political. Who has the power to name another? Who is the other being named? What are they named and why?

### **Neoliberalism**

While Bakr Eid is a sacred festival, its sanctity is a bubble within the neoliberal era we inhabit. The sacred lives within the profane but in this case seems to be viewed in isolation. I wonder how the commodification of goats changes the feel of the festival. Does money pollute the sacred by virtue of its intensely rational and material background<sup>25</sup>?

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<sup>25</sup>I wonder about the relationship between money and religious traditions. Drawing from Marx, money works to bring the now commodity into a realm of relations between things rather than people, money serves as a symbol of crude rationality. Given the context of neoliberalism, where class inequality is pervasive globally, money is used as a weapon against people with less privilege. money symbolizes a value for the material over relationships with God or otherwise. (Marx 1985, 181)

Given the entanglement of all life, how does the sacred festival of Bakr Eid interact with the need to *buy* goats? Who gets to celebrate Bakr Eid? Does the price of a goat obscure its nature as a gift from God?

If 'commodity' and 'gift' are distinct, then muslims in this era must find a way to reconcile the nature of the goat being sacrificed. Is the goat a gift from Allah or a commodity bought from the breeder?

Breeding is a violent practice of unconsensual nonhuman artificially induced pregnancy. Breeding is not only an animal rights issue but a site of intersection between speciesism and sexism. This violence is not sanctioned by Allah.

Yet, there is no purity or stability. Cultures change, norms shift. Muslims have to adapt. Buying the goat for sacrifice is now incorporated into the tradition. This tradition doesn't dilute, it just changes. *Can we accept difference without judgement?*

## O

## P

### **Privilege**

My privilege to study anthropology at Wesleyan University shapes my thoughts. Perhaps I would not be as troubled by the ghosts the pull me apart if I had to focus on economics to ensure my financial security. I would not have the space to care about invalidating someone's identity or think about nonhuman lives to have become vegan.

Most people don't have my privilege. Most people do not have the time or energy to reflect and question the nuanced web of consequences arising from the particular site of Bakr Eid.

## Q

## R

### **Representation**

I am hindu. I am human.

*Who am I to represent Islamic practices or nonhuman interests?*

My knowledge of either side of the tension is through the help of others. I do not experience the festival from either the perspective of a muslim or a goat. This glossary serves *only* to address the tension *I* feel as an outsider related to both communities<sup>26</sup>. I speak only of the experiences I am relayed and sincerely attempt to represent both fairly. To represent, I prepare by

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<sup>26</sup> Perhaps it is useful to learn from our embodied feelings guide. As Gibson-Graham's weak theory works to resist the hegemony of the intellectual realm in epistemology. Weak theory pays attention to affects, emotions, embodiment, and thought as they manifest in lived experience to understand social phenomena. (Gibson-Graham 2006, 7,8)

trying to understand Bakr Eid<sup>27</sup>. I do this by asking my muslim friends about their experiences and working with nonhuman animals to understand embodied communication. *They guide me*. I can only understand them when they consent to helping me understand their experiences. This glossary is indebted to all those who helped me understand and represent the nuances of the festival. *The attempt to understand will always continue*.

### Reification

Islam is not a stable category that can be deployed to represent the actual manifestations of the religion as it manifests for all. I use ‘muslims’ for the ease of articulating my thoughts. However, it serves to generalise all muslim individualities and practices into one. I invite you to remember the multiplicity and nuances of any religion. Islam manifests differently for different people with different compulsions.

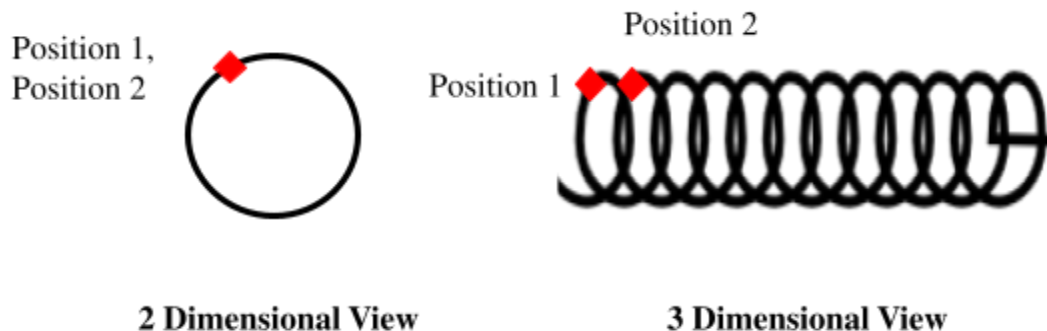
## S

### Secularism

Secularism serves to perpetuate the religious interests of those in power while invisibilizing this hegemony throughout. In India, secularism serves Hindus.

### Spring Continuum

I like to think of time as a spring continuum. At once collapsible and expandable - infinite potential. Time is not merely cyclical, but more.



From a two dimensional view, moving through an entire revolution finds you back at the same point. Seemingly invalidating the movement you make. However, since we are constantly

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<sup>27</sup> Debes explains that understanding must be consensual, continuous and dynamic. If another must truly understand you, they may come close only with your aid to guide their imagination. Since we are in a constant state of becoming, understanding is never complete - it is necessarily a process. (Debes 2018, 67)

becoming, the movement must also have created change. In three dimensions, the dynamism becomes clear<sup>28</sup>.

Representations are then never the complete presentations but a version of them. The past remembered brings back a form of the past.

## **Sundial**

Everyday the sun rises and sets, but everyday is different. Like time, we may recognise that though patterns occur, everything is in a constant flux. Every second things are changing and given our entanglements we are never stable identities. The very nature of things - everything - is always changing to some degree. We view the future possibilities, the present interactions, and our reflections on the past from constantly new perspectives shaped by our experiences. I believe in ontological dynamism<sup>29</sup> - constant change. I must find comfort in instability, in ambiguity. *What might an ethics that rests in ontological dynamism look like<sup>30</sup>?*

For me, right now, it means being flexible in my ideas and beliefs. It means my judgements must be put in perspective of its mortality. Everything changes.

## **T**

## **Tension**

Tension is directional. I am pulled in opposite directions further from each other. Yet, I am tied to both, my friends and the goats I value. Pulling implies an attraction. That I feel this tension of opposition means that it is possible for singular identities to be attracted to dialectical opposites<sup>31</sup>. Yet, I hope to find a way to blur this image and perhaps, find a way forward that might get us closer to some kind of resolution.

I believe it is my responsibility to attend to tensions. When unresolvable, at least in a given context, the only way that I see forward is to be mindful of the tension. I must be attentive to my actions and its consequences such that I carry the tension with me. The ghost of tension becomes a guide to my morality, a light to navigate my life in conflicts.

Could the visualization of the tension that is Bakr- Eid change its form to find way to protect all forms of life? This would depend on our ability to extend ourselves, and maybe

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<sup>28</sup> This diagram is to help understanding what I term 'spring continuum'. However, it is not to depict the complete understanding as it fails to incorporate the multiplicity of springs and dimensions of perspectives whose potentials are limitless.

<sup>29</sup> Langwick 2018, 433.

<sup>30</sup> Learning from compost, we can see constant change. Langwick explains, "Compost is that which fosters a process of living-through. It trains our attention on the ability of parts of the past that have been left behind, residues and scraps, to transform through specific entanglements into something other than themselves— and, if carefully tended, to transform into the components of rich healthy soil, the entanglement that grounds growth and other life. Compost re-members and in so doing, it decenters the work of crisis and its forms of forgetting" (Langwick 2018, 431)

<sup>31</sup> Still, these 'opposites' are still entangled. Tension or opposition does not excuse us from the inherent 'intra-action' and entanglement of all life.

recognize that our identities are already inclusive of our environments and those who comprise them.

*“the human body is never a rigidly enclosed, protected entity, but is vulnerable to the substances and flows of its environments”<sup>32</sup>*

What might it mean that beings who make up each others’ identities can do so in ways that may harm each other and yet not realize the harm necessarily done to ourselves?

## **Tradition**

Tradition has a conservative connotation - looked down upon in light of ‘secularism’. Tradition is seen as a set of rules in an era that privileges flexibility. However, “[t]his is not a nostalgia for tradition but a call for memory, for a remembering that relations between plants, people, and place have not always been as they are<sup>33</sup>”

*Tradition as a site of collectivity is a mode of resisting the alienation that pervades neoliberalism.*

## **U**

### **Understanding vs Justification**

The forces at work in Bakr-Eid drive a recognition of the differences between understanding and justification. This allows me to remain whole while simultaneously being pulled apart. While it is understandable that the Bakr-Eid calls for a goat to be sacrificed due to the social and cultural forces that brought it to life, I could not justify taking an innocent life myself. However, what we justify depends on our internal sense of morality. For Muslims the sacrifice of the goat is completely justified by Allah’s command, trusting that he has reason to demand the sacrifice. While I understand this, my relationship to God is more ambiguous and fluid such that I cannot be sure of God’s desires, or that they even have desires, making the sacrifice unjustifiable to me. Understanding is dependent on perspective taking.

## **V**

### **Violence**

What is violence? When is the term ‘violence’ appropriate?

Structural violence: *“violence committed by configurations of social inequalities that, in the end, has injurious effects on bodies”<sup>34</sup>*

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<sup>32</sup> Alaimo 2010, 28.

<sup>33</sup> Langwick 2018, 421.

<sup>34</sup> Holmes 2013, 43.

Sacrificial violence: “a dramatization of one’s own inevitable death, the depiction of a shared condition of viscosity, a ‘condition of being ransomed to death.’”<sup>35</sup>

## W

### What now?

*“This is no place to search for utopia. Yet noticing the seams is a place to begin.”<sup>36</sup>*

This is a temporary end, but this must still be acknowledged as the last entry for now. We come to a beginning, again. But, this beginning is not the same beginning<sup>37</sup>. It is a new beginning for you to take up.

There are many potential directions and I can not tell you which to take. We are all on our own journeys and I am here only to cause self reflection that may or may not be significant to you. You may take up any part of the glossary and move forward as it may be meaningful to you.

## X

## Y

## Z

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<sup>35</sup> Singh and Dave 2015, 240.

<sup>36</sup> Tsing 2012, 152.

<sup>37</sup> This glossary aims to mimic the spring continuum in its form.



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