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Cash Cows and Dogs with Dentures: Prostheses for Animals in Nineteenth-Century British Culture

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ABSTRACT

This article shows how the history of prostheticized animals is much deeper and richer than one might think. Investigating the interest in fitting animals with prostheses throughout the nineteenth century in Britain, this article explores the emergence of animal prostheses in bovine agriculture through to their use in late Victorian pet keeping. The key concern of this piece is the varied responses to prostheticized animals in print culture. As this article shows through an analysis of magazine and newspaper contributions, reactions to animal prostheses varied from admiration and amazement to annoyance and disgust. By analysing this coverage, the article reveals how representations of animal prostheses brought into collision a surprising variety of important social discourses, including those related to economic productivity, prosthesis access, food adulteration, professional recognition, social norms, class hierarchies, and gender relations. Animal prostheses proved a novel yet apt image that distilled a wide variety of societal concerns. Redirecting the critical momentum established by recent scholarship that unites disability studies and critical animal studies, this article uses nineteenth-century animal prostheses as a case study to demonstrate how the concepts of disability, ableism, classism, and misogyny have been extended by humans across species boundaries and how our approaches to nonhuman care are impacted by them. It therefore establishes a new field of inquiry within Victorian studies for scholarship on the interface between discourses of disability and nonhuman animals.

KEYWORDS: Animals, prostheses, cattle, agriculture, pets, veterinary practice, gender, class, disability, disability studies, critical animal studies, posthumanism

1. INTRODUCTION

From Ada (the goldfish with a buoyancy aid), to Derby (the dog with 3-D printed prosthetic legs), to Chris P. Bacon (the pig with wheels), prostheticized animals are popular figures within contemporary cyberculture.[1] But just how novel is the practice of fitting nonhumans with prostheses? Are there historical precedents for this fascination? And what were the cultural responses to animals with prostheses in the past? This article reveals that the novelty of prosthesis-using animals garnered notable attention in nineteenth-century Britain. As this article shows, the history of prostheticized animals is much deeper and richer than one might think.

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1 synirr, *Disabled Goldfish in Harness*, online video recording, 2 December 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsRwn20xAco> [accessed 2 February 2022]; LADbible, *Derby The Dog With His New 3d-Prosthetic Legs*, online video recording, 5 January 2016 <https://www.facebook.com/LADbible/videos/2625930850787422/> [accessed 2 February 2022]; chrispbaconpig, *Pig in Wheelchair—Chris P Bacon*, online video recording, 27 January 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Z-uO5TPQfM> [accessed 2 February 2022].

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Not only were animals with prostheses depicted in Victorian illustrations and other cultural artefacts, but there is considerable evidence to suggest that real domestic and agricultural animals were fitted with artificial body parts in the nineteenth century too. From 1783, reports appeared in newspapers and periodicals that described instances where farm animals, usually cattle though occasionally pigs, were fitted with wooden legs following accidents that ended in amputation.[2] These reports were rarities to begin with but became more prevalent and were responded to more frequently as the nineteenth century progressed. By the turn of the twentieth century, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) was imagined as an 'animal hospital' where wealthy pet owners could go to get their beloved nonhumans fitted with all manner of prostheses, ranging from glass eyes to false teeth.[3] Investigating the interest in fitting animals with prostheses throughout the nineteenth century in Britain, this article explores the history of animal prostheses from their emergence in bovine agriculture through to their breakthrough within what Harriet Ritvo calls 'the Victorian cult of pets'.[4] The key concern of this is piece is how the periodical press responded to prostheticized animals. As this article shows through an analysis of British nineteenth-century magazine and newspaper contributions, animal prostheses divided opinions. Emotional responses varied, ranging from admiration and amazement to annoyance and disgust. The writing below traces these dominant responses. In doing so, it reveals how representations of animal prostheses brought into collision a surprising variety of important social discourses, including those related to economic productivity, prosthesis access, food adulteration, professional recognition, social norms, class hierarchies, and gender relations. Animal prostheses proved a novel yet apt image that distilled a wide variety of societal concerns.

In light of Claire L. Jones's work on the nineteenth-century history of prostheses, this article considers prostheses for animals using the same definition she provides for human prostheses: 'replacement body parts, [which] "fashioned" the body to both restore functional capability and yet to create the aesthetic of "normalcy"'.[5] As Jones notes, the modern prosthesis industry emerged in the eighteenth century but flourished in the nineteenth in response to 'New understandings of the body, which provided a more clearly defined medical perspective of disability, resulting in the medical profession's attempt to control the impaired body through new corrective procedures and was accompanied by a growing distaste for visible signs of physical impairment within "polite society"'.[6] As I show, prostheses for animals emerged within this same context (alongside concomitant veterinary professionalization and growing expertise) as devices with particular functional and aesthetic purposes, in some ways mirroring increasing social expectations in the nineteenth century for humans with impairments to use technological aids.

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2 For the earliest report, see 'We Hear That an Ingenious Cow-Leech', *Whitehall Evening Post*, 15 April 1783, n.pag. For reports of pigs with prostheses, see, for example, 'Curious Circumstance', *Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser, for Lancashire, Westmorland, &c.*, 24 April 1819, n.pag.; 'A Pig with a Wooden Leg', *Liverpool Mercury Etc*, 9 November 1832, n.pag.; 'A Pig with a Wooden Leg', *Morning Post*, 28 July 1852, p. 6.

3 'World's Most Remarkable Hospital Devoted Exclusively to Animals', *Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, 29 December 1906, p. 420.

4 Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 86.

5 *Rethinking Modern Histories of Prostheses in Anglo-American Commodity Cultures, 1850–1960*, ed. by Claire L. Jones (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), p. 4.

6 *Rethinking Modern Histories of Prostheses*, ed. Jones, p. 4.

Conceptually this article draws from and redirects a growing body of interdisciplinary scholarship that investigates the interrelation of studies of disability and nonhuman animals. Work by scholars including Sunuara Taylor, Cary Wolfe, and Michael Lundblad demonstrates the utility of combining disability studies and animal studies frameworks.[7] Taylor provocatively urges disability studies to open its conceptual remit to include animals:

> Animals, lacking certain traits and abilities, exist outside our moral responsibility. We can dominate and use them, because they are lacking certain capabilities. But if disability advocates argue for the protection of the rights of those of us who are disabled, those of us who are lacking certain highly valued abilities like rationality and physical independence, then how can disability studies legitimately exclude animals for these reasons without contradiction?[8]

For Taylor, disabled people and nonhuman animals experience marginalization because of the privileging of abilities that have hitherto defined human normalcy. Wolfe in a not dissimilar fashion calls for a new ethical model that he describes as posthumanism: 'an ethics based not on ability, activity, agency, and empowerment but on compassion that is rooted in our vulnerability and passivity'.[9] Lundblad also champions posthumanism as an approach that 'allows not only for structural comparisons of biopolitical hierarchies, but also acknowledgments of fundamental differences between different forms of life, even as it disavows a singular binary opposition between "the human" and "the animal"'.[10] He argues that 'Posthumanism and its discontents [. . .] can help us to understand and explore not only problematic histories but also important opportunities, when disability and animality meet'.[11]

Despite the momentum that this critical movement has developed, so far little work has been done that applies this framework to animal prosthetics and considers how this practice extends understandings of both disability (which is primarily considered a social construction impacting humans) and human-animal relations (which are complicated by a care practice with often mercenary motivations). The analysis that follows shows how an approach that combines disability studies and animal studies methods not only sheds light on the complex intersections of speciesism and ableism but also (importantly) how these concepts intersected with discourses pertaining to gender, economics, food culture, and social class. Redirecting the critical momentum established by writers such as Taylor, Wolfe, and Lundblad, the findings of this article are significant as they demonstrate how the concepts of disability, ableism,

7 See Sunaura Taylor, *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation* (London: The New Press, 2017); Sunaura Taylor, 'Beasts of Burden: Disability Studies and Animal Rights', *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19 (2011), 191–222; Sunaura Taylor and Sara E. S. Orning, 'Being Human, Being Animal: Species Membership in Extraordinary Times', *New Literary History*, 51 (2020), 663–85 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2020.0041>; Erica Grossman, 'An Interview with Sunaura Taylor', *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, 12 (2014), 9–16; Cary Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Michael Lundblad, 'Animality/ Posthumanism/ Disability: An Introduction', *New Literary History*, 51 (2020), v–xxi <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2020.0040>; Michael Lundblad, 'Disanimality: Disability Studies and Animal Advocacy', *New Literary History*, 51 (2020), 765–95 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2020.0048>; Sue Walsh, 'The Recuperated Materiality of Disability and Animal Studies', in *Rethinking Disability Theory and Practice: Challenging Essentialism*, ed. by Karín Lesnik-Oberstein (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 20–36; Stephanie Jenkins, Kelly Struthers Montford, and Chloë Taylor, *Disability and Animality: Crip Perspectives in Critical Animal Studies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020).

8 Taylor, 'Beasts of Burden', p. 197.

9 Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?*, p. 141.

10 Lundblad, 'Animality/ Posthumanism/ Disability', pp. xiv–xv.

11 Lundblad, 'Animality/ Posthumanism/ Disability', p. xx.

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classism, and misogyny have been extended by humans across species boundaries and how our approaches to nonhuman care are impacted by them.

Developing parallel to critical interest at the intersection of disability and animal studies, in recent years the history of medicine has also become more attentive to the role of animals as historical actors. For example, in their work on the history of One Health, Abigail Woods, Michael Bresalier, Angela Cassidy, and Rachel Mason Dentinger resist 'anthropocentric' accounts of the medical past, revealing how 'in different times and places, animals have experienced medicine, how they have been produced by it and how they have changed it'.[12] Though there is little to suggest that the practice of prostheticizing animals informed the treatment of human amputees in the period under discussion, the nineteenth-century history of animal prostheses presented here gives insight into how various domesticated animal species experienced practices borrowed from medicine and how the spectacle of prostheticized animals was brought into being by the increasing medicalization of agricultural production and pet culture. More broadly, this study responds to Erica Fudge's call for animal histories to not be treated as distinct but rather considered 'a significant aspect of history more generally'.[13] Fudge argues that animals have 'truly constitutive' roles in not only the making of their own worlds but also those they share with humans, hence their historical importance.[14] This article builds on that argument, showing how the prostheticizing of animals reveals the value of particular animals in the nineteenth century as well as their significance as a pliable and rich image within popular culture.

In the context of Victorian studies, where the topics of disability and animals have separately seen increased scholarly attention in recent years, this work puts these subfields into dialogue.[15] In particular, this article shows the surprising connections between scholarship on bovine agriculture and the development of functional human prostheses in the context of cattle fitted with wooden legs, and it reveals how work on Victorian pet culture corresponds with scholarship on middle-class sentimentalities concerning disability aesthetics. What follows therefore establishes a new field of inquiry within Victorian studies for scholarship on the interface between discourses of disability and nonhuman animals.[16]

12 Abigail Woods, Michael Bresalier, Angela Cassidy, and Rachel Mason Dentinger, *Animals and the Shaping of Modern Medicine: One Health and Its Histories*, Medicine and Biomedical Sciences in Modern History (Basingstoke: Springer Nature, 2017), p. 2.

13 Erica Fudge, 'Milking Other Men's Beasts', *History and Theory*, 52 (2013), 13–28 (p. 27) <https://doi.org/10.1111/hith.10682>.

14 Fudge, 'Milking Other Men's Beasts', p. 23.

15 On the disability side of the equation, see, for example, Clare Walker Gore, *Plotting Disability in the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019); Kylee-Anne Hingston, *Articulating Bodies: The Narrative Form of Disability and Illness in Victorian Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019); Iain Hutchison, Martin Atherton, and Jaipreet Virdi, *Disability and the Victorians: Attitudes, Interventions, Legacies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020). Regarding recent Victorian animal studies titles, see, for example, Brenda Ayres and Sarah Elizabeth Maier, *Animals and Their Children in Victorian Culture* (London: Routledge, 2019); Kevin Morrison, *Victorian Pets and Poetry* (London: Routledge, 2021); Helen Louise Cowie, *Victims of Fashion: Animal Commodities in Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022); Jane Hamlett and Julie-Marie Strange, *Pet Revolution: Animals and the Making of Modern British Life* (London: Reakton Books, 2023).

16 Existing work includes *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain*, ed. by Marlene Tromp (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press); Jennifer Esmail, *Reading Victorian Deafness: Signs and Sounds in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2013); Jennifer Esmail, '"The Little Dog Is Only a Stage Property": The Blind Man's Dog in Victorian Culture', *Victorian Review*, 40 (2014), 18–23 <https://doi.org/10.1353/vcr.2014.0000>; Maren Tova Linett, 'Beast Lives: Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau*', in *Literary Bioethics: Animality, Disability, and the Human* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2020), pp. 31–60; Anelise Farris, '"What on Earth Was He—Man or Animal?": Posthuman Permeability in H.G. Wells's The Island of Doctor Moreau', *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 9 (2020), 130–56 <https://doi.org/10.15353/cjds.v9i2.628>; Galia Benziman, 'Talking

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This article also engages with readings of animal prostheses emerging from studies in ethics. In a rare analysis that draws from disability studies and critical animal studies to investigate animal prostheses, A. Marie Houser critiques the popularity of images of prostheticized animals in contemporary culture, including some of those described at the start of this article. She argues that images of these critters work 'homoeopathically' to 'soothe our "knowing without knowing" that nonhumans are used and abused'.[17] For Houser, images of disabled animals fitted with prosthetic devices reassure and relieve the viewer, obscuring and deferring the knowledge that we as humans are oftentimes the primary sources of nonhuman animal suffering and death. Alongside this philosophical work, animal prostheses have also been a contentious issue within recent veterinary ethics scholarship. For example, Anne Quain, Michael P. Ward, and Siobhan Mullan investigate the ethical challenges associated with advanced veterinary care (AVC), a form of practice 'characterised by higher costs, advanced skills, [and] state-of-the-art techniques and equipment', which is often associated with the use of 3D-printed prostheses.[18] They review a variety of ethical challenges to AVC from veterinary ethics literature, including 'poor quality of life, dysthanasia and caregiver burden, financial cost and accessibility of veterinary care, conflicts of interest, and the absence of ethical review for some patients undergoing AVC'.[19] Some of the concerns mentioned in this article align with those that entered mainstream consciousness when Channel 4 'Supervet' Noel Fitzpatrick was accused of gross professional misconduct and bringing his profession into disrepute in 2017, after performing multiple amputation and prosthesis surgery on a tortoise. Fitzpatrick's complainants alleged that these AVC procedures amounted to overtreatment bordering on experimentation.[20] While the RCVS ultimately did not find Fitzpatrick guilty of misconduct, this public case, which was protracted over 14 months, shows that the fitting of animal prostheses is divisive within the veterinary community.

Outlining the historical precedents for the concerns outlined in animal ethics scholarship, what follows reveals how Victorian attitudes to animal prostheticization were inflected by a tendency to present this practice in a way that highlighted human benevolence and ingenuity while concealing the root (human) causes of animal suffering. This article shows how Houser's cynical approach had historical forebears. For many Victorian commentators, animal prostheses epitomized human greed and vanity on an absurd level. Though these commentaries were generally not underpinned by an ethics informed by the interests of nonhuman animals (as in the case of critical animal studies or veterinary ethics), it is still interesting to see that the mechanical augmentation of impaired animals' bodies was viewed sceptically as self-interested at a time when human domination over nonhumans was rarely questioned.

Birds and Talking to Birds: Transcending the Child in Barnaby Rudge', *Dickens Studies Annual*, 52 (2021), 1–29 <https://doi.org/10.5325/dickstudannu.52.1.0001>.

17 A. Marie Houser, 'Grace for a Cure: Poisoned Ethics and Disabled-Nonhuman Images', *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, 12 (2014), 17–33 (p. 17).

18 Anne Quain, Michael P. Ward, and Siobhan Mullan, 'Ethical Challenges Posed by Advanced Veterinary Care in Companion Animal Veterinary Practice', *Animals*, 11 (2021), 1–16 (pp. 2–3) <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11113010>. Also see Roger B. Fingland and others, 'Preparing Veterinary Students for Excellence in General Practice: Building Confidence and Competence by Focusing on Spectrum of Care', *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 259 (2021), 463–70 <https://doi.org/10.2460/javma.259.5.463>.

19 Quain, Ward, and Mullan, 'Ethical Challenges', p. 1.

20 Tim Dowling, 'Supervet Noel Fitzpatrick: "I Was Millimetres Away from Death"', *The Guardian*, 19 October 2020 <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/oct/19/supervet-noel-fitzpatrick-i-was-millimetres-away-from-death> [accessed 17 May 2022].

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This article thus adds to the ethical literature on animal prostheses, showing how from their inception animal prostheses raised questions about whom or what they are for.

2. CASH COWS

While it is important to note that far greater numbers of injured livestock were slaughtered than saved and fitted with a prosthesis in nineteenth-century Britain, periodical records show that the practice of fitting impaired animals with prostheses began in bovine agriculture before infiltrating the world of pet keeping. Clearly such reports were considered newsworthy because of their quirkiness, but their occurrence nonetheless begs the question: Why did farmers bother experimenting with prostheses rather than euthanizing injured cattle?

One explanation involves simple economics. Indeed, as Harriet Ritvo and Ron Broglio have demonstrated in their work on the history of bovine breeding practices, beef in the nineteenth century was big business.[21] It was in fact large in two senses: first, because there was considerable cultural and financial investment in the 'achievements' of prize breeders; and, second, since the cows that were produced by such breeding practices were truly enormous – so colossal, in fact, that we would today consider them as bred and fed to the point of severe impairment.[22] Ritvo shows us that the breeding of fat cattle resulted from a response to changing social conditions impacting Britain in the nineteenth century. She writes:

> Increased food production was necessary to feed the rapidly expanding English population [. . .] In addition, as an island nation frequently at war with its closest neighbors during this period and potentially vulnerable to blockade, Britain needed to be able to provision itself. Meat was a particularly valuable commodity in international competition, because the ability of especially urban industrial workers to buy it was an index of British commercial prowess, and because, according to popular belief, it was the consumption of red meat that distinguished brave and brawny English soldiers from puny, snivelling Frenchmen.[23]

Amidst this climate, the breeding of fat cattle, animals that could feed more and embody Britain's agricultural superiority, became a business with huge financial incentives. In particular, because of its perceived suitability for both fattening and milk production, the shorthorn breed was viewed as without rival.[24] The high esteem that this breed held in was reflected by vastly inflated market prices for its pedigrees. In 1865, for instance, the *Times* reported that 12 shorthorn cattle sold for £6510.[25] Meanwhile, substantial prizes were awarded at 'Fat Cattle' competitions to winning breeders. Most famously, between 1843 and his death in 1861, Prince Albert won almost £1000 in medals for his pigs and cattle.[26]

[21] Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, pp. 45–81; Ron Broglio, '"The Best Machine for Converting Herbage into Money": Romantic Cattle Culture', in *Consuming Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century: Narratives of Consumption, 1700–1900*, ed. by Tamara S. Wagner and Narin Hassan (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010), pp. 35–48; Ron Broglio, 'Building Better Beef: Biotech and the Construction of Cattle', in *Second Nature: Origins and Originality in Art, Science, and New Media*, ed. by Jenny Sundén and Rolf Hughes (Stockholm: Axl Books, 2011), pp. 90–111.

[22] Sunaura Taylor in Grossman, 'Interview', p. 14.

[23] Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, p. 47.

[24] John R. Walton, 'The Diffusion of the Improved Shorthorn Breed of Cattle in Britain during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 9 (1984), 22–36 (p. 23) <https://doi.org/10.2307/621865>.

[25] Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, p. 55.

[26] Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, p. 54.

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While these high sale prices and prizes outline the value of pedigree cattle at the very upper end of the market, nineteenth-century beef prices demonstrate the high economic value of even regular cattle in this period: the average wholesale price in pence per 14 lb stone for beef in London in the period 1846–1864 ranged from 64 to 98.[27] For context, the average dead meat weight per head in lb for cattle was 730 in London in 1859, meaning that an average-sized carcass in this year (at the value of 92 pence per stone) would have been worth £19 19s. 9d.[28] Therefore, though there were significant costs attached to the raising and feeding of cattle, the lucrative figures they could raise actualized the pioneering eighteenth-century grazier Robert Bakewell's famous claim that a cow is 'the best machine for converting herbage into money'.[29]

Given the high financial incentives, it is easy to see why for some farmers, particularly those struggling financially, the practice of fitting injured cattle with prosthetic limbs made sense. If you could save a pedigree, dairy, juvenile, or unfattened cow's life by having an injured leg amputated and a prosthesis fitted, you could make it 'productive' again: able to fatten (for meat), breed, raise young, and/or produce milk. Though there is scant discourse directly linking the fatness of nineteenth-century cattle to injuries resulting in amputation, the volume of reports in both newspapers and veterinary publications (such as *The Veterinarian: A Monthly Journal of Veterinary Science*) about amputee cows suggest that cattle severely injuring legs was not uncommon. What is implied, however, in several reports is the ungainliness of these animals thus hinting at their fatness.[30] Furthermore, several reports boasted of how well amputee cattle fatted following their prosthesis fittings.[31] It is therefore clear that having injured cattle fitted with prostheses recuperated their status as 'cash cows'. With these factors in mind, we can begin to understand from one perspective why stories of cattle with prostheses appeared with growing frequency in the agricultural news sections of newspapers and periodicals: they showcased an unusual and yet apparently inspirational form of human ingenuity that could reap large financial rewards – or at least avoid undesirable losses.

Though clearly exceptional given the large numbers of cattle slaughtered in this period, newspaper and periodical repositories reveal dozens of cases of cattle fitted with prosthetic limbs, and many of these stories were reprinted or retold multiple times across regional newspapers. As mentioned, one dominant trope of these sources was the narrative of productive success. For example, the following appeared in the 6 June 1859 issue of the London one-penny newspaper, the *Standard*, before being reprinted in at least nine other regional newspapers within a two-week span:

> A cow belonging to Mr Dann, farmer, of Kelfield Lodge, near Selby, had one of her fore legs broken on Martinmas-day last, by the kick of a horse [. . .] Mr Shaw, veterinary surgeon, of Stillingfleet [. . .] said that nothing short of amputation would effect a cure. Mr Shaw operated on the 4th of March. She calved a fine calf a week before, and she brought

27 Richard Perren, 'The Meat and Livestock Trade in Britain, 1850-70', *The Economic History Review*, 28 (1975), 385–400 (p. 396).

28 Perren, 'The Meat and Livestock Trade', p. 400.

29 Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, p. 66.

30 See, for example, 'A Cow with a Wooden Leg', *Northern Liberator and Champion* (Newcastle, 21 November 1840), p. 3; and 'A Cow Belonging to Mr John Raby', *Era* (London, 26 January 1845), p. 8.

31 See, for example, 'A Cow, with a Wooden Leg', *The Plough Boy, and Journal of the Board of Agriculture*, 1.13 (1819), 103; and 'Cow with a Wooden Leg', *Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser, for Lancashire Westmorland, &c.* (24 April 1819), n.pag.

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> it up [. . .]; and now that the animal possesses the advantage of a wooden leg, she has been turned out to grass, and makes a wonderful shift for herself.[32]

While the reprinting of stories such as this suggests that such cases were unusual and hence newsworthy, what is clear in this example is the celebratory tone surrounding veterinary prowess and human ingenuity more generally. The phrase 'nothing short of amputation would effect a cure' portrays the vet's intervention as an act of heroism.[33] It is worth noting that at this time veterinary practitioners were vying to assert themselves professionally, in terms of usefulness, social status, and recognition, and so positive representations such as this provided important publicity for them.[34] Similar reports later in the century were entitled 'A Veterinary Triumph', and a particular veterinary surgeon, Mr Snarry of Norton, Northamptonshire, received high praise for successfully performing amputations and prosthesis fittings on cattle on two separate occasions.[35] These extraordinary examples evidence Abigail Woods and Stephen Matthews's observations that though injured cattle were primarily treated by farmers in this period, they were occasionally visited by vets.[36] In the *Standard* report, what is also implicit is the apparent savviness of the farmer's decision to save the cow's life: by letting the vet amputate, the farmer gained a 'fine calf' brought up by its mother. Note the language used to describe the cow's recovery: she now 'makes a wonderful shift for herself'. This statement emphasizes her supposed workmanlike efforts while borrowing from the lexis of the burgeoning factory system.[37] The emphasis of this reportage was clearly placed on celebrating what was seen as an unusual yet novel and utilitarian solution to an issue of productivity.

This representation is striking in terms of how it drew from contemporary ideas surrounding prosthetic limbs for humans. In particular, the emphasis in this passage on the prosthesis effecting a return to productivity reflects the dominant way that such devices were imagined and marketed as 'cures' for the perceived productivity crisis facing injured workers. As Cindy LaCom explains, 'Those unable to meet industrial workplace standards because of a disability or deformity were increasingly exiled from the capitalist norm, which demanded "useful" bodies, able to perform predictable and repeated movements'.[38] Responding to such prejudices, the burgeoning prosthesis market promised to standardize the amputee's body and return him to his productive best.[39] (I use the gendered pronoun 'him' here as marketing

32 'A Cow with a Wooden Leg', *Standard* (London, 6 June 1859), p. 7.

33 'A Cow with a Wooden Leg', *Standard* (London, 6 June 1859), p. 7.

34 J. R. Fisher, 'Not Quite a Profession: The Aspirations of Veterinary Surgeons in England in the Mid Nineteenth Century', *Historical Research*, 66 (1993), 284–302 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2281.1993.tb01814.x>; Anne Hardy, 'Professional Advantage and Public Health: British Veterinarians and State Veterinary Services, 1865–1939', *Twentieth-Century British History*, 14 (2003), 1–23 <https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/14.1.1>.

35 'A Veterinary Triumph', *Western Mail*, 8 September 1885, n.pag.

36 Abigail Woods and Stephen Matthews, '"Little, If at All, Removed from the Illiterate Farrier or Cow-Leech": The English Veterinary Surgeon, c.1860–1885, and the Campaign for Veterinary Reform', *Medical History*, 54 (2010), 29–54 (pp. 34, 38).

37 'A Cow', p. 7.

38 Cindy LaCom, '"The Time Is Sick and out of Joint": Physical Disability in Victorian England', *PMLA*, 120 (2005), 547–52 (p. 548).

39 Erin O'Connor, *Raw Material: Producing Pathology in Victorian Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), pp. 101–47; Ryan Sweet, '"Get the Best Article in the Market": Prostheses for Women in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Commerce', in *Rethinking Modern Histories of Prostheses in Anglo-American Commodity Cultures, 1850–1960*, ed. by Claire L. Jones (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 114–36 (pp. 118–23); Ryan Sweet, *Prosthetic Body Parts in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), pp. 178–85 <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-78589-5> [accessed 7 June 2022].

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materials for prosthetic limbs primarily targeted men.) Popular British limb maker Frederick Gray, for instance, promoted the accomplishments of his devices in the 'Cases' section of his 1855 artificial-limbs manual. For one Mr J. L. C. he wrote, 'he can walk with great ease, and being a professional man in town, to be able to walk is almost an essential qualification to him.'[40] Note here the emphasis on physical locomotion as a defining trait of professional manhood. With specific focus on male amputees, cultural historian Erin O'Connor explains that 'Artificial limbs 'implant[ed]' an otherwise dislocated amputee in "reality"—home, street, market, work—by supplying him with a functional technology of manhood, a support system whose levers, cogs, pulleys, and springs operate[d], paradoxically, to sustain the fiction of a unified, integrated self'.[41] For O'Connor, then, the very notion of masculine self was embodied in prosthetic technologies that promised productivity.

It is worth noting, however, that despite the celebrated technophilic ideal of using cutting-edge prostheses to recuperate injured workers back into the workplace, economic realities meant that artificial limbs, such as those produced by talented makers including Gray, were rarely used by industrial labourers. In his 1855 catalogue, Gray self-consciously admitted the unfortunate fact that artificial limbs, as opposed to their primitive prosthetic forefathers peg legs, were expensive to make, meaning that without state sponsorship or benevolence on the part of firms, they were simply beyond the financial reach of maimed industrial workers.[42] Indeed, at the time Gray wrote his treatise, only two railway companies and one charitable association paid for prosthetic limbs for injured employees.[43] Such companies and schemes were very much anomalies.[44]

When we read the *Standard* report in relation to the prohibitive cost of prostheses for injured human workers, some significant points of comparison and contrast are raised. On the one hand, we can see that prosthetic limbs were imagined as material solutions to the perceived compromised productivity of both impaired human workers and injured agricultural livestock. Of course, this is not to say that impaired humans were or are in any way like injured nonhuman animals, nor indeed that human amputees were treated in the same way as injured cattle. For a start, in most cases cattle with severely injured limbs would have been euthanized whereas surgeons routinely performed successful amputations on injured humans. Furthermore, basic prostheses, such as peg legs, were available to even the poorest of human amputees while these kinds of devices were considered novel and innovative in the rarer cases when they were used on nonhumans. However, due to the economic worth of pedigrees of certain revered breeds, such as shorthorns, and other cattle who were particularly effective producers of milk and/or calves, fitting prostheses to cattle was more commonly viewed as an economically viable act than industrial firm owners paying for injured workers to have artificial limbs fitted. Evidence from nineteenth-century agricultural insurance schemes highlights how in certain contexts cattle were valued more greatly than agricultural servants. For

40 Frederick Gray, *Automatic Mechanism, as Applied in the Construction of Artificial Limbs, in Cases of Amputation* (London: H. Renshaw, 1855), p. 119.

41 O'Connor, *Raw Material*, p. 123.

42 Gray, *Automatic Mechanism*, p. 107.

43 Gray, *Automatic Mechanism*, p. 108.

44 David M. Turner and Dael Blackie, *Disability in the Industrial Revolution: Physical Impairment in British Coalmining, 1780–1880* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), pp. 93–127 (pp. 75–76) <https://www.manchesteropenhive.com/view/9781526125774/9781526125774.00011.xml> [accessed 4 July 2022]; Ben Curtis and Steven Thompson, '"A Plentiful Crop of Cripples Made By All this Progress:" Disability, Artificial Limbs and Working-Class Mutualism in the South Wales Coalfield, 1890–1948', *Social History of Medicine*, 27 (2014), 708–27.

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instance, Christabel Susan Orwin and Edith H. Whetham have brought to light how in the 1860s the Border Farm Servants Protection Association of Scotland made allowances of £3 on the death of a member, £1 for a wife or child, and £5 for the death of a cow.[45] However, if we think comparatively about human labourers versus pedigree cattle in the context of prosthesis provision, we once more see how both were united by social conventions: like human amputees whose chances of using high-end prostheses were determined by wealth and social class, in the majority of cases it was the most valuable pedigree cattle – the veritable grazing gentry – that were afforded the chance of using prosthetic aids if they lost a limb. However, given the current animal welfare concerns surrounding much more advanced animal prostheses, one cannot say with confidence that such cattle were much more privileged than their lower pedigree peers. Though the latter may have seen a swifter trip to the abattoir, they may have experienced less suffering.

The gender difference is also worth noting here: whereas prostheses were primarily marketed to men as functional recuperative technologies, reflecting their status as the primary breadwinners,[46] cows rather than bulls were generally more valuable because of their abilities to give birth, raise calves, and produce milk. It was therefore cows as opposed to bulls that were more commonly fitted with prostheses if injured. This makes sense practically since the main role of bulls was breeding and the rudimentary prostheses produced for cattle in this period would not have done much to facilitate this act.[47] There are, however, a handful of accounts of bullocks (neutered male cattle raised for beef) being fitted with wooden limbs.[48] The differing treatment that male and female cattle received speaks to Lisa Kemmerer's observation about gender and modern agriculture: 'Because of their biology, female farmed animals are more rigidly confined for a longer period of time than male farmed animals (who are simply sent to slaughter as adolescents)'.[49] Comparing the situations facing human amputees of the labouring classes to those of pedigree bovine amputees shows that ableist, sexist, and classist assessments of 'worth' cut across species lines to determine who was seen as a suitable candidate for prosthetic assistance.

3. BOVINE BENEVOLENCE

Though it appears to have been mostly economically valuable cattle that were fitted with prosthetic limbs, some relatively early sources about prostheticized cows reveal that an emotional

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45 Christabel Susan Orwin and Edith H. Whetham, *History of British Agriculture,1846–1914* (London: Longmans, 1964), p. 225. Insurance payments such as this were based on financial worth, and this was easier to measure for a cow than a person. Women earned less hence their lower 'worth'. Low insurance payments for deaths of kids continued into the late twentieth century on the basis that they were usually not wage earners.

46 O'Connor, *Raw Material*, pp. 101–47; Sweet, 'Get the Best', pp. 118–23; Sweet, *Prosthetic Body Parts*, pp. 178–85.

47 The devices generally described include simple wooden stumps. Pads (to cushion the stump) and leather straps (to affix the device) are occasionally mentioned as are wooden supports and leather bands. Some of the later devices produced used by veterinary surgeons were described as 'iron-bound'. See 'Provincial Occurrences, in the Counties of England, Arranged Alphabetically', *New Monthly Magazine and Universal Register*, 8 (1817), 170–80 (p. 171); 'A Cow with a Wooden Leg', *Blackburn Standard*, 5 August 1857, n.pag.; 'A Cow with a Wooden Leg', *Dundee Courier & Argus and Northern Warder*, 30 January 1883, n.pag.; and 'At the Animals' Hospital', *Strand Magazine: An Illustrated Monthly*, 1 (1891), 70–77 (p. 76).

48 'The Bullock with the Wooden Leg', *Soulby's Ulverston Advertiser and General Intelligencer*, 9 November 1848, p. 2; 'At Polventon', *The Cornish Telegraph*, 13 September 1871, p. 4; 'A Bullock with a Wooden Leg', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 9 July 1872, p. 3; 'A Bullock with a Wooden Leg', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 9 March 1892, p. 6.

49 Lisa A. Kemmerer, 'Introduction', in *Sister Species: Women, Animals and Social Justice*, ed. by Lisa A. Kemmerer (Baltimore, MD: University of Illinois Press, 2011), pp. 1–44 (p. 19) <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/swansea-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3413846> [accessed 27 May 2022].

as well as monetary economy was in operation regarding certain bovine amputees. Some, it would seem, were fitted with prostheses out of compassion rather than for calculated economic gain. For instance, the following report appeared first in the *Perth Courier* and was reprinted in the *Sheffield Independent* on 29 August 1829:

> Last week, a cow in the neighbourhood of Blairgowrie, received a severe injury in one of its legs, and, in the hope that the parts would adhere, it was neatly and skilfully bound up. The bandages were not removed till it was supposed all was nearly right—but it was found that the member had become separated from the body. The cow was a peculiar favourite of the gude wife who bewailed grievously the misfortune. To appease her grief, a neighbour artfully constructed a wooden leg for 'Crummy,' who is thereby enabled to go about her business like any other cow.[50]

Here, despite the use in the last sentence of language to do with productivity ('her business'), we get the sense that 'Crummy' received veterinary treatment and subsequently a wooden leg out of love rather than for monetary gain. The fact that this cow had a name (which was not typical for farm animals) emphasizes her significance to the 'gude wife'. Typically, though, for this period, there is a clear gendering of the sentimentality that is directed towards the nonhuman. Note how the anonymous author (who it would seem is either a man or at least posing as one) distances his position from that of the 'gude wife' (the mistress of the house or farm), whose compassion is shown to be expressed by emotional excess ('bewail[ing] grievously') and thus, by contemporary standards, 'feminine': her attachment to the cow is described as 'peculiar' – a word that since the early seventeenth century could mean 'strange' as well as 'particular' – and the cow's name is encased in quotation marks, both moves that keep the compassion of the house mistress at arm's length. We can perhaps understand the slight estrangement of the reporter to the compassionate position as once again economically grounded. Later veterinary textbooks such as Royal College of Veterinary Surgery president George Fleming's 1884 work *A Text-Book of Operative Veterinary Surgery* advised against amputation to large animals in the majority of cases because such procedures were believed to 'reduce them in condition for at least a considerable time, and consequently greatly diminish their value'.[51] Though it would be remiss to assert that the writer of the 'Crummy' report had such a sophisticated knowledge of the considerations to be made before having a cow fitted with a wooden leg, the tone of the reportage suggests a level of scepticism informed by similar principles. Outward criticism is, perhaps, tempered by the fact that Crummy's leg separated naturally thus not requiring the cost of surgery.

Another factor explaining the distancing of the reporter to the compassionate actions of the 'gude wife' concerns the way in which provincial life is set up as oddly anachronistic, quirky, and amusing. This same approach underpins the nineteenth century's most famous depiction of a prostheticized cow: Miss Betsy Barker's Alderney in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford*, which first appeared in serialized parts between 1851 and 1853 in Charles Dickens's weekly magazine *Household Words*.[52] In a memorable sketch characteristic of the 'simple charm, warm humanity, and nostalgia' underpinning the work traditionally considered her finest, Gaskell

50 'Last Week, a Cow', *Sheffield Independent, and Yorkshire and Derbyshire Advertiser*, 29 August 1829, n.pag.

51 George Fleming, *A Text-Book of Operative Veterinary Surgery* (London: Baillière, Tindall, and Cox, 1884), p. 246 <http://archive.org/details/cu31924001121551> [accessed 23 October 2017].

52 Elizabeth Gaskell, *Cranford* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1892).

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imagines a beloved pet cow who 'in an unguarded moment' falls into a lime pit, resulting in her losing her hair.[53] Following the advice of a neighbouring half-pay army captain, who fears the Alderney will die if not helped, the loving owner fits her in 'a flannel waistcoat and flannel drawers', much to the amusement of her fellow villagers and no doubt the reader.[54] Highlighting the mid-Victorian metropolitan fascination with the eccentricities of rural life, the narrator ends the sketch with the question, 'Do you ever see cows dressed in gray flannel in London?'.[55] Like the *Sheffield Independent* report, Gaskell certainly relishes the perceived oddness of rural practices and (together with reports including the one about Crummy) establishes sentimental women as being a driver for pet prostheticization. (Captain Brown in fact advises Miss Betsy to kill the animal but says that she should adorn it in flannel if she wishes to keep it alive.) However, Gaskell appears slightly more sympathetic to the owner's actions. As Thackeray Ritchie wrote in his 1891 preface for the novel, 'Cranford chooses its own inhabitants, and is everywhere, where people have individuality and kindness, and where oddities are tolerated, nay, greatly loved for the sake of the individuals'.[56] Ritchie also noted that Gaskell 'loved country things and farming things; she always kept her cow, even in Manchester'.[57] It is also well known that the fictional Cranford was based on Knutsford (Cheshire) where Gaskell grew up. In a letter to Ruskin, she even suggested that the events in *Cranford* are a toned-down version of what she witnessed in her youth.[58]

While this section has shown how sentimentality and critiques of it framed some discussions of prostheticized cattle in early to mid-nineteenth-century print culture, as we will see later, sentimental women became targets of satire in humorous depictions of prostheticized pets, which appeared with growing frequency in the late nineteenth-century press.

4. CATTLE COMEDY

As the nineteenth century progressed, prostheticized cattle were not just a topic of intrigue within local news reportage and sentimental literature. They also garnered enthusiastic attention later in the century within the expanding satirical press. Given the curious nature of the topic at hand, it is perhaps unsurprising that the wooden-legged cow phenomenon provided rich material for satire. For the contributors to the satirical journals *Judy*, *Funny Folks*, and *Moonshine* in the 1880s, cows with wooden legs were both an absurdity that provided easy material for comic quips and an example of human greed in need of mocking. Exemplifying the word-play fun that was had, a one-liner from *Judy* in 1885 read, 'We trust the veterinary surgeon, who supplied the wooden leg to the cow, did not omit a nice *calf*'.[59] The same year, *Funny Folks* provided a slightly longer and more contextually encoded quip:

> Susan: 'Oh, Mr Milkman, please, missus objects to your milk—we keep finding bits o' wood and things in it!'

[53] Jill L. Matus, 'Editorial Matter: Introduction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Elizabeth Gaskell*, ed. by Jill L. Matus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. i–xxi <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2301799076/citation/36D73AACCE4D42E5PQ/6> [accessed 15 June 2022]; Gaskell, *Cranford*, p. 8.

[54] Gaskell, *Cranford*, p. 8.

[55] Gaskell, *Cranford*, p. 9.

[56] Thackeray Ritchie, 'Preface', in *Cranford*, by Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (London: Macmillan and Company, 1892), pp. v–xxiv (p. viii).

[57] Ritchie, 'Preface', p. xxii.

[58] Ellis H. Chadwick, *Mrs. Gaskell, Haunts, Homes, and Stories* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman, 1910), p. 43 <http://archive.org/details/mrsgaskellhaunts00chadrich> [accessed 15 June 2022].

[59] 'Humanity', *Judy*, 9 December 1885, p. 287.

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Imperturbable Simpson: 'It's all right; the fact is, our cow have got a wooden leg!'[60]

Here, controversies surrounding the adulteration of food – a major issue in nineteenth-century Britain discussed in detail by historians such as Andrea Broomfield, Rebecca F. Stern, and John Burnett – were gestured towards as the wooden-legged cow was deployed as an absurdly apt image for such a jest.[61] Such context was also notable in several other humorous representations of cows with prostheses. An 1885 joke in *Moonshine* read, 'On the Westow Grange Farm, near York, there now rambles and ruminates a cow with a wooden leg. But that this statement is made on good authority, one wooden-t believe it. Cows with iron tails, though, have long been numbered amongst the pumps—if not the vanities—of this wicked world.'[62] A few months later, the following lines of verse appeared in the same publication:

The Dairy Show! The Diary Show!
To town the graziers stump,
But where is the Cow with the Wooden Leg
And where the Iron Pump?[63]

The following year a similarly themed jest appeared in *Funny Folks* which read, 'The *Lancet* has been crowing over the success which has attended the amputation of a cow's hind leg and the substitution of a wooden one. How absurd! A cow with a wooden leg isn't much of a novelty, considering how long Londoners have known the cow with an iron tail!'.[64] It should be noted here that the writers of these pieces did not refer to literal mechanized cows with metallic tails. Rather, in their references to 'Cows with iron tails' and 'Iron Pump[s]' these comical writings drew attention to the heavily scrutinized practice of urban dairymen watering down their products, which was brought to public light several decades earlier in Henry Hodson Rugg's influential 1850 exposé *Observations on London Milk*.[65] The metaphor of 'The Cow with the Iron Tail' was then coined by journalist and friend of Dickens, Richard H. Horne, in an 1850 article for *Household Words*.[66] In this article, Horne used the image of 'The Cow with the Iron Tail' to evoke the way that London milkmen topped up their stock at local water pumps. The fact that cows with wooden legs were to or at least discussed alongside 'The Cow with the Iron Tail' indicates that prostheticizing farm animals was seen as a similar, though perhaps not quite so repugnant, instrumentalized money-making exercise. These comical depictions suggest that most farmers did not fit their livestock with prostheses out of care or empathy; instead, they did so to keep their cattle productive, or, more specifically, reproductive. By amputating damaged limbs and fitting three-legged cattle with prosthetics, owners could

60 'Susan', *Funny Folks*, 564 (1885), 298.

61 Andrea Broomfield, *Food and Cooking in Victorian England: A History* (Westport: Praeger, 2007); Rebecca F. Stern, '"Adulterations Detected": Food and Fraud in Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market"', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 57 (2003), 477–511 <https://doi.org/10.1525/ncl.2003.57.4.477>; John Burnett, *Plenty and Want: A Social History of Food in England from 1815 to the Present Day* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 86–104.

62 'On the Westow Grange Farm', *Moonshine*, 19 September 1885, p. 154.

63 'At the Agricultural Hall', *Moonshine*, 17 October 1885, p. 193.

64 'Off! Off!', *Funny Folks*, 626 (1886), 372.

65 H. Hodson Rugg, *Observations on London Milk, Showing Its Unhealthy Character, and Poisonous Adulterations; with Remarks on the Food of the Cows, Their Pestilential Places of Confinement; with Suggestions for Remedying the Evil* (London: Bailey & Moon, 1850).

66 [Richard H. Horne], 'The Cow with the Iron Tail', *Household Words*, 2 (1850), 145–51.

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not only defer the financial loss of losing livestock but could enable impaired beasts to continue to breed, raise calves, and/or just produce milk.

5. PROSTHETICISED PETS

Considerable scepticism also infused reportage surrounding the emergence of prostheticized pets from the mid-to-late nineteenth century. As explained by animal historians, pet keeping was by no means new in the nineteenth century, but it was during this period that it reached critical mass and, as a result, received considerable social commentary.[67] Previously a pastime of the social elite, by the mid-century pet keeping was a more widespread social activity.[68] Ingrid H. Tague's argument is that the democratization of pet keeping began in the previous century following Britain's rise to economic dominance in Europe. As Tague suggests, during this period pets became 'increasingly visible indicators of spreading prosperity'.[69] By the late nineteenth century, as Jane Hamlett and Julie-Marie Strange observe, 'pet owners were confronted by an array of products claiming to promote animal and bird health'.[70] For many contemporary commentators, prosperity had turned to preposterousness, overindulgence, and gross sentimentalism: Ritvo describes how '*Punch* frequently satirized the foolishness of dog lovers who fed their pets from the table, dressed them in elaborate outfits, and allowed them to inconvenience human members of the household'.[71] Along similar lines, in her 2013 book *Beastly London*, Hannah Velten reveals that by the early twentieth century veterinary practitioners publicly warned Londoners to resist the ludicrous luxuries of the so-called 'Dog's Toilet Club', where products such as scented baths, perfumes, pocket handkerchiefs, fur coats, rubber boots, and various other anthropomorphic items could be purchased for a price that one lady vet wrote 'takes one's breath away'.[72] The following paragraphs show that in late nineteenth-century Britain prostheses for pets were considered somewhere between the veterinary successes of prostheticized cattle and examples of pet care gone mad.

Journalistic pieces such as Harold MacFarlane's 1899 *Country Life Illustrated* article 'Animals and Birds as Patients' described how, by the fin de siècle, veterinary practice was so well established that beloved pets could get all manner of prosthetics fitted to help them to cope with injuries and physical losses, ranging from splints and artificial limbs to false teeth. Macfarlane reported that:

> about a year ago there was exhibited at a certain show a very interesting and aged Schipperke, who was at that time the only dog in the world boasting a complete set of false teeth. His owner, Mr. Moseley, is a dentist as well as a lover of animals, and it is entirely due to his skill that the little dog is able to eat with perfect comfort by the aid of the artificial molars provided for him by his master.[73]

[67] Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500–1800* (London: Allen Lane, 1983), pp. 107–20; Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, pp. 85–87; Hannah Velten, *Beastly London: A History of Animals in the City* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), p. 8; Hamlett and Strange, *Pet Revolution*, p. 9.

[68] Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, p. 3; Sarah Amato, *Beastly Possessions: Animals in Victorian Consumer Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), pp. 13–15.

[69] Ingrid H. Tague, *Animal Companions: Pets and Social Change in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2015), p. 3.

[70] Hamlett and Strange, *Pet Revolution*, p. 148.

[71] Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, p. 86.

[72] Ignatius Phayre qtd. in Velten, *Beastly London*, pp. 185–86.

[73] Harold Macfarlane, 'Animals and Birds as Patients', *Country Life Illustrated*, 5 (1899), 495.

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Earlier sources suggest that Macfarlane's claim about the uniqueness of Moseley's dog with dentures may not have been entirely accurate. Indeed, an 1875 *Sporting Gazette* report suggested that a fox terrier with false teeth won first prize at a dog show in Manchester.[74] Along similar lines, an 1895 story in the *Witney Gazette and West Oxfordshire Advertiser* described a pug that was '£20 better in appearance' as a result of having a deformed eye removed and a glass one fitted, noting how it had been 'exhibited often since'.[75] These sources evidence Hamlett and Strange's observations about veterinary care becoming more common for affluent pedigree dog owners in in the second half of the century.[76] Like the reports of cattle with wooden limbs, though, these sources suggest that there were in some cases financial incentives behind fitting pedigrees with prostheses. In the same year, a report appeared in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, which described a cross-bred fox-terrier bitch called 'Squidger', who had fitted been with an aluminium artificial leg, complete with 'white buckskin laced up behind, and a soft rubber sole', courtesy of her owner, Mr Moseley – likely the same Mr Moseley who fitted the Schipperke with false teeth.[77] According to the *Daily Mail*, by the turn of the twentieth century, fitting dogs with dentures was quite common practice. The 1901 article 'At the Dog's Dentist's' reported that 'Many dogs are going about the world with sets of false teeth. One West-end lady has a dachshund who is so advanced in years that he has been recently invested with three new gold-plated teeth, while four have been 'stopped' with the same precious metal at a cost of £15'.[78] The inclusion of such an exorbitant cost in a report such as this shows on the one hand how far affluent pet owners were willing to go to care for and/or stylize their dogs. On the other, it highlights how wealthy and often female pet owners were becoming subjects of ridicule for such practices – contrasting the financial savviness sometimes associated with the owners of prostheticized cattle. Even if the dachshund was destined for dog shows, the high cost for its teeth would have been seen as a high-risk investment indicative of vanity.

The desire to prostheticize pets deemed to be physically incomplete holds interesting parallels with the nineteenth-century discourse for human prostheses. Regarding nineteenth-century America, Stephen Mihm observes that concealment of impairment became the primary concern for middle-class prosthesis users since 'first impressions might deny them opportunities in marriage, employment, and social advancement'.[79] Sweet shows how this view also proliferated in nineteenth-century Britain: 'the nineteenth century witnessed the codification of a social system that privileged physical wholeness and marginalized those who displayed physical difference'.[80] The examples of prostheticized pets highlighted above reveal how the Victorian privileging of wholeness extended from humankind to the nonhumans that they cared for. Though clearly pets did not hold the same social stakes as the middle-class amputees whom Mihm describes, pets were believed to reflect the social status of their owners.[81] In this respect it makes sense that similar presentational codes were applied to them

74 'The Kennel', *Sporting Gazette*, 663 (1875), 86.

75 'A Pug Dog with a Glass Eye', *Witney Gazette and West Oxfordshire Advertiser*, 7 December 1895, p. 3.

76 Hamlett and Strange, *Pet Revolution*, p. 158.

77 'A Dog with a Wooden Leg', *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 26 May 1895, n.pag.

78 'At the Dog Dentist's', *Daily Mail*, 9 January 1901, p. 7.

79 Stephen Mihm, '"A Limb Which Shall Be Presentable in Polite Society": Prosthetic Technologies in the Nineteenth Century', in *Artificial Parts, Practical Lives: Modern Histories of Prosthetics*, ed. by Katherine Ott, David Serlin, and Stephen Mihm (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2001), pp. 282–99 (p. 288).

80 Sweet, *Prosthetic Body Parts*, p. 58.

81 Amato, *Beastly Possessions*, p. 26.

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as their human masters and mistresses. The exorbitant cost of the prostheses for pets also aligns with the context already described regarding the market for prostheses for humans. Like human prosthesis makers, veterinarians were also profiting from the ascending middle class's ableist fixation on physically complete appearances.

6. HORSE HUMOUR

As we might expect, the stereotype of the affluent, over-sentimental, lady pet owner overinvesting (economically and emotionally) in her animal companions by having them fitted with prostheses became a target for jests in the late nineteenth-century satirical press. However, those that physically fitted pets with prostheses were also open to mockery. For instance, a poem about Moseley's dog with false teeth published in *Fun* in 1897 was prefaced with the playful comment, 'Owners of canine favourites whose 'grinders cease because they are few' are already [. . .] but the theme tempts us to doggerel'. It then parodied Isaac Watt's famous 1715 children's song 'Let dogs delight to bark and bite', ending with the lines, 'That a myriad dogs delight to bite / 'Cos THE DENTIST made them so!'.[82] Here then, owners, their dogs, and the dentists who fitted them with such devices were all mocked. Despite their push for respectability and public recognition throughout the nineteenth century, dentists were commonly derided for their perceived cruelty and charlatanism.[83] For the writer of this poem, the case of Moseley's dog with dentures provided a particularly absurd example of a dentist's shamelessness in pursuing patient fees. In this regard the satire was not dissimilar in target to the perceived instrumentalism critiqued in the humorous depictions of cows with wooden legs described above. However, the final lines, with their emphasis on the number of dogs ('a myriad') and their augmented nature ('THE DENTIST made them so!'), also signal broader Victorian concerns about the rise of physiological-technological integration.[84]

Funny Folk's 1877 illustration 'The Ladies' Mile of the Future' provides a more explicitly gendered humorous critique of the growing trend for animal prostheses.[85] This illustration was constructed as a response to recent reports about horses being shot after riding accidents. Its caption reads, 'Moved by the recent sad reports of horse accidents, in which the "noble animal was shot on the spot," an ingenious mechanist has invented an ingenious equine wooden leg. The effect of its coming into general use is likely to be seen to peculiar advantage in the Ladies's Mile'. The image itself shows not only several horses with wooden legs but also a dog with crutches in the bottom left and an elderly male rider to the far right, who is also a lower-limb prosthesis user. Using hyperbole and the grotesque mode, the illustration comically suggests that such a future of mass prostheticization is on the near horizon, echoing the anxiety of writings about human prostheses such as Edgar Allen Poe's 'The Man That Was Used Up' (1839) and Andrew Wynter's 'The Artificial Man' (1859).[86] What comes through strongly from the title ('The Ladies' Mile of the Future'), the centrality of the lady rider within the composition, and the inclusion of the loyal prostheticized lap dog is a perception that domesticated animals were being prostheticized as a result of the influence of 'ladies' – females

82 Isaac Watts, 'Let Dogs Delight to Bark and Bite', *Hymnary.org* <https://hymnary.org/text/let_dogs_delight_to_bark_and_bite> [accessed 17 June 2022]; 'Canis Uptodaticus!', *Fun*, 1695 (1897), 144.

83 John Woodforde, *The Strange Story of False Teeth* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 109–24.

84 Sweet, *Prosthetic Body Parts*, pp. 73–125.

85 'The Ladies' Mile of the Future', *Funny Folks*, 134 (1877), 92.

86 Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Man That Was Used Up: A Tale of the Late Bugaboo and Kickapoo Campaign', in *The Works of the Late Edgar Allan Poe* (New York, NY: Blakeman & Mason, 1859), 315–25; [Andrew Wynter], 'The Artificial Man', *Once a Week*, 1 (1859), 218–20.

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of respectable social status, with considerable financial means, who conformed to particular sentimentalized but also increasingly assertive codes of behaviour. In this regard, we see how both class and gender inflected the humour and sense of revulsion that this image was designed to generate. Prostheticized pets and working animals were seen as extensions of an affluent, overly sentimentalized, and increasingly feminized culture, which was being mocked for its extravagance.

In this sense, though this practice is not represented as 'mad' but rather absurd, we can see it as contiguous with the contemporary pathologizing of women's association with animal advocacy. As Diane Beers shows (with particular reference to the United States), led by Charles Dana, several late nineteenth-century physicians invented a diagnosable form of mental illness called 'zoophilpsychosis', a condition supposedly produced by 'overgrown sentimentality'.[87] Lori Gruen and Fiona Probyn-Rapsey recently used this example to illustrate their concept of 'animalady': 'animaladies highlight how pathologizing human-animal relationships blocks empathy toward animals because the characterization of animal advocacy as mad, 'crazy,' and feminized, distracts attention from broader social disorder regarding human exploitation of animal life'.[88] 'The Ladies Mile of the Future' complicates this concept since many Victorian readers, who being on average fairly knowledgeable about horses due to their proximity to them in everyday life, would have been aware of the cruelty and inefficacy of fitting such animals with prostheses. In this case, then, over sentimentalism towards injured animals is represented in comical terms as ignorant and ridiculous rather than 'mad'.

7. CONCLUSION

As this article has shown, though the practice of fitting animals with prostheses was unusual in nineteenth-century Britain, cultural responses to it took off in a notable way. Attitudes towards this practice were by no means stable. While in certain contexts, such as regional news reports about valuable cattle, prostheses were treated with surprise and admiration as financially savvy solutions to apparent crises of productivity, elsewhere they were satirically mocked as a paradigm of greed or vanity taken to the level of absurdity. Satirical imaginaries of animal prostheses distilled concerns about excessive instrumentalism, sentimentalism, presentational norms, and female influence on society. In context with current concerns about AVC, nineteenth-century representations show that the practice of fitting animals with prostheses and the concerns raised about it have much deeper and richer histories than we might think. Though infused with what we today consider problematic degrees of speciesism, ableism, elitism, urban-centrism, and sexism, concerns raised by nineteenth-century commentators often hinged on the timeless question of who the primary beneficiary of prostheticizing practices was. Too often these sources suggest it was human greed or vanity that was the main driver. Despite the scepticism, this article shows why animal prostheses garnered so much intrigue. They provided a novel image that captured the zeitgeist of the nineteenth century: technological implementation permeated by prominent tensions between ingenuity and stupidity, prudence and greed, pragmatism and sentimentalism, professionalism and

[87] Diane L. Beers, *For the Prevention of Cruelty: The History and Legacy of Animal Rights Activism in the United States* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006), p. 109; Charles Dana, 'The Zoophilpsychosis: A Modern Malady with Illustrative Cases', *Medical Record: A Weekly Journal of Medicine and Surgery*, 75 (1909), 381–83 (p. 382).

[88] Lori Gruen and Fiona Probyn-Rapsey, 'Distillations', in *Animaladies: Gender, Animals, and Madness*, ed. by Lori Gruen and Fiona Probyn-Rapsey (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), pp. 1–8 (p. 2).

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experimentalism, kindness and callousness, exploitation and conservation, masculinity and femininity, deviance and normalcy, and techno-utopia and techno-dystopia.

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