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The elimination of Marius, the giraffe: humanitarian act or callous management decision?

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ABSTRACT

Zoos serve as recreation facilities and tourist attractions, but their primary roles also include education, research and conservation. Conservation in particular has emerged as a vital component of zoos, with the aim of diversifying the genetic base of many species that have been rendered threatened or endangered. However, conservation is often couched within a managerial structure that places individual animal interests against broader species specific interests and economic considerations. Zoos make trade-offs between these considerations according to issues of space, efficiency and profitability. This conflict has recently come to the fore in reference to the elimination of Marius, a healthy 18-month-old male giraffe, at the Copenhagen Zoo, which elicited a public uproar. We consider the reasons and alleged constraints which led the Zoo to its decision to eliminate Marius, examine the reactions of scientists and members of the public to the event, interpret it as a consequence of conflicts between the multiple roles of contemporary Western zoos, and discuss it in terms of competing approaches to animal ethics.

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Introduction

The relationship between zoos and tourism is an under-researched topic in tourism studies. Even after Mason (2000) pointed out this shortcoming, only few works were published on this topic (e.g. Frost, 2011), although approximately 700 million people visit accredited zoos each year (WAZA, 2012). Although domestic visitors predominate in zoos, foreign tourists constitute a significant component of the visiting public of major zoos, and some even specifically target tourists through the use of 'charismatic animals', such as polar bears, pandas (Frost, 2011, p. 6) or giraffes. Zoos are thus a potential tourist attraction, in addition to being recreational or amusement sites, especially for children (Turley, 2001), as well as centres of conservation and education (Frost, 2011) and economic enterprises. These roles of the zoo not only provoke a 'crisis of identity' (Frost, 2011, p. 5), but also pose ethical quandaries and policy dilemmas which are difficult to resolve. We shall investigate these issues in a case study of the elimination of Marius, a young giraffe in the Copenhagen Zoo, which has recently provoked worldwide attention.

On 9 February 2014, an 18-month-old healthy giraffe in the Copenhagen Zoo, known as 'Marius', was lured by his keeper:

> … with a piece of rye-bread, his favorite food, into a yard away from other giraffes, and as he bent down his long neck to take the treat from his keeper's hand, a veterinarian dispatched him with a shot from a bolt gun to his head (Morell, 2014).

After an autopsy, his carcass was dismembered and dissected in front of an audience, which included children, and then fed to lions and other big cats in the zoo (Schwartz, 2014).

This is a short, 'thin' description (Shankman, 1984) of the elimination of 'Marius, the giraffe', the appellation under which his case attracted wide public attention. In the 'thick' descriptions of the event in the media and on the Internet, Marius was variously said to have been 'put down' (Abend, 2014), 'killed' (Reis, 2014), 'slaughtered' (*The Economist*, 2014), 'destroyed' (Keegan, 2014), 'executed' (Luxton, 2014) or 'murdered' (Bekoff, 2014), terms which reflect the wide range of ethical positions or emotional reactions provoked by the event.

The announcement by the Zoo of its intention to eliminate Marius incited a sharp public reaction, including an online petition to spare his life (Johnston, 2014) signed by approximately 28,000 people (Reis, 2014), and after his elimination, an outpouring of outrage in the media and on the Internet, including a petition to put the Zoo under a new administration (Keegan, 2014;

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Reis, 2014) and threats to the life of its chief scientist (*The Economist*, 2014). The elimination of Marius became a minor *cause célèbre,* which opened a murky window on managerial practices in contemporary European zoos. The present case sustains a long-established practice of turning animals into media celebrities, which has existed at least as far back as the sale of Jumbo the elephant to P.T. Barnum in 1882 (Harding, 2000). Other captive animals generating widespread media attention include giant pandas An-An and Chi Chi, said to be major players in easing Cold War tensions during the 1960s and 1970s (Blewitt, 2013; Coleman, 2013); the famous gay penguins of the Central Park Zoo in the late 1990s (Adams, 2013) and Paul the Octopus of the Oberhausen Sea Life Centre in Germany, who could allegedly predict the outcome of football matches (Blewitt, 2013).

We shall first examine the reasons and alleged constrains which led the Zoo to its decision to eliminate Marius. We shall then discuss the reactions of scientists and members of the public to the event and offer our interpretation of it. Finally, we shall use this singular event to throw light upon some fundamental ethical issues facing Western zoos.

The position of the zoo

The Copenhagen Zoo is a member of EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria), an umbrella organization with 345 members in 41 countries. In addition to education, research and entertainment (Frost, 2011), one of EAZA's primary goals is animal conservation, intended to preserve global biodiversity (EAZA, 2014), with a view to the possible future release of the preserved species into their natural environment. EAZA runs a giraffe-breeding programme, in which the Copenhagen Zoo takes part. The decision to eliminate Marius was taken within the framework of that programme.

The Zoo has provided a detailed explanation of the decision to eliminate Marius. Its reasoning was supported by EAZA (Reis, 2014) and further explained and justified by several scientists sharing the Zoo's approach.

The Zoo represented the elimination of Marius as an unavoidable consequence of scientific, managerial and economic circumstances. Since zoos have to keep small the populations of any animal species for limitations of space and resources, they face a constant threat of inbreeding. The optimization of genetic diversity, conducted by the method of artificial selection, therefore became a primary goal of animal population management in zoos. The international breeding programme of EAZA, in which the Zoo participates 'aims at ensuring a healthy giraffe population in European zoos. If an animal's genes are well represented in a population further breeding with that particular animal is unwanted' (*Zoo København*, 2014); it thus becomes a 'surplus' animal (Johnston, 2014). Marius' genes were 'well represented in the breeding programme and as there [was] no place for the giraffe in the Zoo's giraffe herd the European Breeding Programme for Giraffes has agreed [with the decision] that Copenhagen zoo euthanize the giraffe' (*Zoo København*, 2014). According to an EAZA spokesman, 'Castration and contraception have been raised as [alternative] possibilities [to euthanizing Marius], but both would require sedation … a relatively high-risk procedure in giraffes, as they are liable to break their necks when they fall while sedated' (*BBC News Science and Environment*, 2014). The Zoo claimed that contraception had unwanted side effects on giraffes (Reis, 2014). The Zoo declined to consider releasing Marius into an unsheltered natural environment, claiming that, being raised by humans, he would soon fall prey to carnivorous predators (*Zoo København*, 2014). The Zoo maintained that it was precluded from selling the giraffe to facilities outside EAZA (Goldman, 2014), because the rules of EAZA forbade sending unwanted animals to non-member organizations which do not adhere to its strong animal welfare principles. The Zoo therefore refused several offers to acquire Marius (*Associated Press*, 2014), even refusing one from Yorkshire Wildlife Park, UK although it is a member of EAZA where Marius' older brother already lived (Goldman, 2014). The Zoo reasoned that 'if the Wildlife Park had space available to receive another giraffe, it should be for a more genetically-valuable animal' (Reis, 2014). Having rejected all these alternatives, the Copenhagen Zoo concluded that it had no choice but to eliminate Marius.

Seeking to put the elimination of Marius in a broader context, the Zoo and the scientists who supported its decision pointed out that hundreds of deer are 'culled' annually in a Danish national park to keep its ecological balance (*Zoo København*, 2014), and that no public outcry would follow the elimination of a less attractive animal than a giraffe.

We shall return to those comparisons below; here, we note only that the controversy about Marius led to the disclosure 'of the dark underbelly of the whole captivity industry', as Davison (2014) put it, namely that approximately 5000 'surplus' animals (Milmo, 2014; Reis, 2014) are annually eliminated from European zoos, among them approximately 100 larger animals (*Huntington Post*, 2014), information which few zoos readily disclose (Milmo, 2014). The Copenhagen Zoo puts down 20–30 animals annually (Davison, 2014); it recently killed four lions in connection with another of its breeding programmes (*The Guardian*, 2014).

In a review of the Zoo's decision to eliminate Marius, Jason Goldman, a specialist in human-animal engagement, considered the pros and cons of several alternatives to prevent 'individuals who have not been given a breeding recommendation for producing offspring' (Goldman, 2014): separation in a single sex enclosure, sterilization, contraception, release in the wild and transfer to another facility, and found that each of these alternatives had detrimental effects on the welfare of the animal. Goldman then challenges those 'who are horrified by the idea of Marius' euthanasia what alternative they would choose, given the risks and downsides associated with each'. He emphasizes that such a choice 'is not something that science is equipped [to] address' (because it involves a trade-off between incommensurable values (Cohen & Ben-Ari, 1993), that cannot be rationally calculated). Goldman himself seems to prefer euthanasia over all other alternatives, considering the animal's death preferable over life under impaired welfare conditions.

Goldman (2014) explained the emergence of 'surplus' animals in contemporary zoos: these zoos do not usually import animals from the wild anymore; rather, with the rapid progress of reproductive physiology and veterinary medicine, breeding of wild animals in captivity has become so successful 'that we now face the challenge of limiting population growth'. Since zoos strive 'to allow the animals to express the widest [possible] range of species-typical behaviours … this endeavor necessarily includes breeding'. Hence, the zoo must decide what to do with off-spring whose genes are already well represented in the population. Advocates of euthanasia argue that they should be euthanized once they have aged 'to the point where [they] would normally seek out a new social group', thus giving the parents the opportunity to complete the parenting process. They argue that, 'From the parents' perspective, euthanizing their progeny (outside of their view) is not functionally different from relocating the animal to a different social group'. But Goldman asked, 'whether the parents' ability to experience mating and parenting behaviours was worth the uncomfortable [sic!] outcome for the juvenile'. It is a trade-off decided on by humans, who kill the animals 'for their own good', but the latter have no voice in the proceedings.

The ethics of artificial selection

Artificial selection is a modern version of eugenics which safeguards genetic diversity by preventing inbreeding. It favours the genetically more valuable specimens of a species to the detriment of others, who under the restrictive economic conditions of zoos may become 'surplus' animals. Under certain circumstances, like those which allegedly prevailed in the case of Marius, such animals are eliminated or 'euthanized'. Artificial selection is considered the most efficient method to safeguard the long-term survival of endangered species under conditions of captivity, although some doubt its efficiency (Laidlaw, 2001).

This raises a fundamental question: is it ethically justifiable for humans to use their power over wild animals to eliminate those individuals which they consider genetically less valuable, for the good of the conservation of the species? Specifically in the present case: was it justified to eliminate Marius, to protect the genetic diversity of the giraffe population in the Copenhagen Zoo?

This is a complex question considering that there are different animal ethics approaches that can be used to examine Marius's elimination, including animal welfare, ecofeminism, ecocentrism, utilitarianism, animal rights and contractarianism. We find it most relevant to the issue of Marius's elimination to contrast the ecocentric perspective, in association with utilitarianism, with the animal rights approach, because they represent opposing positions relevant to the issue in question: a species' population dynamics approach (the Zoo's perspective), versus individual standing or the right to life based on inherent value (media and the public). The two chosen perspectives, according to Sagoff (1984, p. 42), stand in such sharp contrast, that: 'Environmentalists [ecocentrists] cannot be animal liberationists. Animal liberationists cannot be environmentalists'. Both theories are explained in more detail below.

Ecocentric theory places moral value on the sustainability of the whole system (ecosystem) in line with the philosophy of Aldo Leopold: actions that preserve the integrity and stability of the natural world are judged to be morally praiseworthy. From a practical standpoint, as long as ecosystems are being respected, broadly speaking, there is no limit to the types of human activities that might take place in nature. As such, if hunting, fishing and other so-called consumptive activities are good for the whole system (e.g. culling animals in the wild for purposes of population management), they would be deemed morally acceptable. Consequently, we should be more disturbed over the destruction of wild ecosystems than we should be about killing individual animals. From this point of view, the elimination of Marius could be justified.

The ecocentric-utilitarian position has been widely adopted by zoos as a responsible management policy in the handling of 'surplus' animals. Lacy (1991, 1995), who maintains that position, argued that decisions on whether animals should live or die in zoos should be based on an assessment of trade-offs among values

(Lacy, 1991); these trade-offs are often couched in terms of cost-benefit calculations in reference to available resources. Lacy's perspective is utilitarian because he is concerned with the long-term or multi-generational consequences or effects of an action on the survival of a species. It is also ecocentric because he places moral value on whole ecosystems rather than individual animals. A preference of the interests of the whole system will also benefit the welfare of individuals living within ecological communities (Fennell, 2013a). Loftin (1985) similarly argued that it is a massive waste of resources to consider the needs of individual animals (e.g. to doctor a sick animal); rather, efforts ought to be focused on species or ecosystems. Loftin maintained that those who favour the interests of individual animals over the collective are biologically illiterate.

Lacy (1995) argued that in making responsible decisions over the culling of surplus animals in zoos, those of little value to a Species Survival Plan (SSP) should be culled, thereby providing cage space for animals which are more valuable to the breeding programme: 'In a world of finite resources for captive breeding, culling one animal directly allows another to live' (Lacy, 1995, p. 189). He opined that 'the loss of a species, and therefore, the prevention of all future lives of that form and any other that could have arisen from it to be far worse than the loss of any individual life' (Lacy, 1995, p. 190). However, Lacy also argued that a surplus animal in a SSP can have a role to play somewhere else. This may include relocation of the animal to fit within another SSP, or to serve as an attraction at another facility. Alternatives should always be explored before an animal is euthanized. Killing the surplus animal is just the last resort:

> If the animal cannot be placed anywhere that would provide appropriate care without thereby compromising the greater good of the welfare of more animals, then it is the moral responsibility of the institution with stewardship of the animal to euthanize it (Lacy, 1991, pp. 295–296).

Selling an animal to other accredited zoos is morally acceptable to Lacy. However, if the only option is to sell it to a roadside zoo, circus or other facility where the welfare of the animal is placed in jeopardy, the proper course of action is to kill it to avoid unnecessary suffering. Indeed, this was the position taken by the Copenhagen Zoo.

Lacy noted that we demonstrate 'speciesist' attitudes when we choose to euthanize some species but not others. Thus, the great apes are almost never euthanized because they share similar traits with us. On the other hand, hoofstock, such as giraffes, are frequently euthanized at zoos after fulfilling reproductive roles, and rodents, bats, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish merit almost no consideration when it comes to euthanasia (Lacy, 1991, 1995). From the Zoo's perspective, the elimination of Marius was thus an apparently standard, unobtrusive procedure. However, the Zoo overlooked certain circumstances, to be discussed below, which exposed the elimination of Marius to the glare of international attention.

In contrast to the ecocentric-utilitarian position, the animal rights approach asserts that vertebrates, because of their capacity for consciousness, sentience and intentionality have inherent value and should therefore be viewed as ends-in-themselves. Regan (2004) argued that inherent value is categorical in the sense that individuals either have it or not, and cannot be gauged by degrees, so that some animals have more inherent value than others. It is a value that all beings who are 'subjects-of-a-life' share equally (Regan, 2004, p. 243).

Regan's theory is based on considerations of formal justice. It is egalitarian (i.e. we deserve the same respect equally) and non-perfectionist (i.e. one individual is no better and therefore more deserving of a higher level of moral regard than any other). Humans should not use animals as resources or as means to an end, and particularly not for entertainment, which is morally unjustifiable because of the suffering it inflicts on animals to provide pleasure for humans (Fennell, 2012a). Animal rights theory extends moral concern to individual animals since animals possess inherent value and hence deserve protection for their own sake. Therefore, the elimination of Marius, based on any of the metrics discussed above, is unjustified.

There appears to be a general pattern in the discourse surrounding Marius' death. The actions of the Zoo's management correspond to the ecocentric and utilitarian theoretical perspectives, while the reaction of animal protection organizations tend to the animal rights perspective. The latter perspective can also be ascribed to at least some members of the public who protested against the elimination of Marius, although the reaction of others might have been more impelled by emotions, rather than by some abstract philosophical considerations.

General precepts and particularistic bonds

The Zoo's justification of the elimination of Marius, couched in ecocentric terms, was severely criticized for a variety of reasons, even by people who do not explicitly oppose the euthanizing of 'surplus' animals. Some questioned whether the elimination was absolutely necessary in Marius's case, asserting that the Zoo's decision was precipitate, and that it displayed an arrogant attitude

(Kelly, 2014) by failing to seriously consider alternatives to euthanasia, such as birth control and relocation (Davison, 2014). Furthermore, while the Zoo claimed that it could not find a place for Marius within the EAZA system, little attention had been paid to sanctuaries as an option to keep Marius alive. Sanctuaries maintain the welfare of animals on a very high standard – perhaps on a standard equal or higher than EAZA zoos, and take on surplus animals from zoos. An opinion piece in the *Chicago Tribune* (2014) blatantly expressed this criticism: 'Killing without exhausting nonlethal alternatives does not quite live up to … standard', while the Zoo's insistence that it had no choice sounded like 'bureaucrats upholding rules over common sense as well as compassion'.

Others criticized the very rationale of the giraffe breeding programme, asserting that giraffes are not an endangered species and hence zoo-based programmes are superfluous (Davison, 2014). The most radical criticism came from a representative of Born Free cited by Kelly (2014): 'Since giraffes [bred in captivity] are unlikely to survive in the wild … the aim of conservation … becomes questionable', from which follows that the elimination of Marius had served no purpose.

However, even granted that in terms of the Zoo's ecocentric approach the elimination of Marius for the survival of the species might seem justified, two further issues emerge. One relates to the specific circumstances of Marius' elimination, the second to the broader managerial policies of the Zoo.

Culling members of a particular species in protected natural areas is an anonymous process; the culled animals may be selected for certain traits, but they are not individually identified – they are anonymous; this makes the killing not only emotionally easier but also ethically more justifiable: all animals with certain characteristics have an equal chance to be killed. In culling, the victims are not individually pinpointed, as they are, for example, in human 'targeted killings' in course of hostilities, which are considered ethically problematic (Kretzmer, 2005; Statman, 2004).

However, zoos are not a protected natural area, inhabited by anonymous animals. Most species are represented by just a few animals, many of whom possess an individual identity, and some even bear distinctive names. They may have fans among the younger visitors. The decision to eliminate such an animal creates a dissonance: it is based on general (genetic) considerations, but pinpoints a particular, individually known (or even loved) animal. While the Copenhagen Zoo sought to justify its decision to eliminate Marius on general grounds, it disregarded the particularities of Marius' individual standing with the public.

The analogy drawn between the culling of deer or slaughtering of chicken with the elimination of Marius breaks down on this point – the deer and the chicken killed are anonymous. Marius was not. He was given a personalized identity, as witnessed by his (informal) name, and was apparently popular and petted by visitors to the Zoo. When the intention to eliminate him became widely disseminated by the media, Marius became a type of celebrity, with fans around the world, as testified by the wide response to the petition to save his life. The Zoo's decision to eliminate him on impersonal scientific grounds, despite his distinctive identity and individual popularity, was perceived as a callous act.

This raises the issue of the ethical standing of particularistic animal-human bonds. Some bio-ethicists, such as Singer (2009), might take a strict universalistic position and consider the prioritization of pets and other personified animals as sentimentalist and unethical. However, particularistic bonds of parenthood, community and friendship, involving mutual trust, commitment, obligations and emotional involvement, play a crucial role in human society, and few would deny their ethical relevance; and there is no reason why analogous bonds between humans and other animals should be denied a similar ethical standing. Indeed, the literature is thick with examples of how we ought to treat animals under our influence. For example, Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) argued that because we breed animals, such as domesticates, to be dependent upon us, such interventions demand positive duties to them, i.e. we must take into consideration their interests because of this intervention. The literature is especially robust in reference to companion animals. Cooke (2011), for example, argued that we have duties to companion animals which do not apply to wild or domesticated animals such as livestock because of the former's status as property; because of the relationship of love, care and dependency; and because of the companion's intrinsic value. Marius falls somewhere in between a companion animal and a wild animal given the nature of his standing, with the inference that he was deserving of a higher moral status than less personalized zoo animals. The Zoo has disregarded the personalized, emotional human-animal ties between him and humans, especially his fans, not only by not sparing him, but also by the manner in which he was eliminated and his carcass subsequently dispensed.

That disregard was already manifested in the ploy by which Marius was initially lured away from the herd. The intention of the Zoo was clear: to simulate the young giraffe's leaving the herd for a different social group as he reached adulthood (Goldman, 2014), instead of just killing him in front of his parents. However, the offer of

rye bread by his keeper for that purpose was a breach of trust (Morell, 2014), a manipulation of the keeper-animal bond deployed to facilitate the 'euthanization' of Marius.

The Zoo has claimed that the dissection of Marius in front of children constituted a 'teachable moment' (Davison, 2014), which had in fact fascinated the visiting children, rather than turned them off (Renzetti, 2014). However, critics argued that the 'educational value of such demonstrations must be assessed … against potential to shock and desensitize', and claimed that the event was in fact 'counter-educational' since it sent the wrong message from the Zoo, namely 'we have our needs as an institution and industry, but when our needs aren't being met, these animals are disposable' (Davison, 2014). It showed that, in the treatment of animals by the Zoo, rational, utilitarian considerations override any particularistic sentiments; or, as Tudge (2014) put it, the Zoo prioritizes 'head over heart'.

The Zoo preferred to use the bolt gun rather than a lethal injection for the elimination of Marius in order not to contaminate Marius's meat (*Zoo København*, 2014), which it had intended to feed to carnivorous animals. It had sound nutritional reasons for that decision because the meat of 'wild game, with its profile of unsaturated fats, is better [for carnivorous animals] than the saturated fat of standard domestic beef' (Tudge, 2014). However, the Zoo failed to recognize the callousness of that decision, with its implied switch in the symbolic standing of Marius: alive, he was a personalized pet and public celebrity; dead, he became anonymous meat to be fed to lions (see Adams, 1990).

Marius and the zoo's managerial policies

Some commentators suspected that the case of Marius might not be just a random, innocent instance of the procreation of a 'surplus' animal, but rather a direct consequence of the managerial policies pursued by the Zoo, aimed at the enhancement of its attractiveness to potential visitors. Morell (2014) pointed out that 'Humans … are drawn to babies of all kinds: we love the big eyes, the floppy limbs, the fluff and fuzz of infants. Baby leopards, baby pandas, baby elephants … baby giraffes. They all draw huge, paying crowds to zoos'. Thus, the birth of a panda cub in Chiang Mai Zoo in Thailand engendered a national craze, causing an unprecedented rise in the number of people seeking to see the newborn (Cohen, 2010). Zoos therefore want their animals to have offspring to be displayed to visitors. However, once the young animals grow up, their attractiveness gradually fades; some are then reduced from star attractions to the status of surplus animals, and might be eliminated. Animal rights campaigners therefore 'accused some institutions of breeding "box office" species to draw crowds when the animals are young before culling them in adulthood' (Milmo, 2014). Morell (2014) draws attention to 'Copenhagen Zoo's Facebook page, where it celebrates the birth of a baby giraffe (possibly Marius) [parenthesis in original] in 2012'. She insinuates that it was worthwhile for the Zoo to keep Marius as long as he could be displayed as a young animal, although he did not fit its breeding programme; he was thus from the outset a 'surplus' animal and could be eliminated once '18 months old, past the cute stuffed-toy stage of a baby giraffe, [he] would be … keen to mate'. From that perspective, the elimination of Marius can be seen as a direct outcome of the managerial policies of the Zoo.

Discussion and conclusions

The Zoo's procedure in eliminating Marius followed the ecocentric-utilitarian approach in animal ethics, prevalent in contemporary Western zoos and similar establishments. The elimination of Marius was not exceptional in that respect. The culling of animals in zoos in large numbers is evidently a regular, although unobtrusive occurrence (Cronin, 2014). The Copenhagen Zoo itself euthanized a lion family a few weeks after the Marius controversy in order to renew its breeding stock (*The Guardian*, 2014). Other European zoos euthanized members of a number of different species because of a fear of inbreeding or lack of space. Most of the euthanized animals in zoos are fed, just as in the case of Marius, to large predators such as lions and tigers (Abend, 2014).

In contrast to those cases, the elimination of Marius elicited a public uproar. The criticism of animal rights organizations, which oppose in principle any killing of animals, is understandable and had to be expected. However, the huge public outrage was hardly based merely on considerations of animal rights. Many people who do not generally protest the killing of animals might have become outraged in the case of Marius. We claim that their outrage derived less from a sense that the elimination of Marius was ethically wrong, and more from a sense that it was a misjudged or unfortunate, in Austin's (1975) terms an 'un-felicitous' decision.

In contrast to breeding farms, animals in zoos are not just anonymous specimens. Zoos are interested in personalizing their animals. Young named animals offer children opportunities for bonding. Such animals attract visitors, and therefore have economic value for the zoo. The desire of the zoos to enable their animals to display the whole range of their species-typical behaviour serves as a pretext to permit their animals to

breed, and engage in the parenting of their offspring, even if the zoo does not need it. The young animals may initially serve as an important source of revenue; however, when their attractiveness declines as they grow up, they might become 'surplus' animals, and under certain circumstances, like those surrounding Marius, be quietly eliminated.

However, in Marius' case the decision to eliminate was made public; rather than the apparent intention to straight forwardly disclose a difficult decision, the Zoo's declaration was widely perceived as a perfidious switch in attitude on part of the Zoo: previously it encouraged cherishing Marius as a cute, personalized, named animal, but the Zoo then sought to discard him as an unwanted burden on its space and finances, while disregarding the particular ties forged between Marius and his fans. People found such a switch in the Zoo's conduct inappropriate and protested against it. As the media took up Marius' case, they turned him into a celebrity and thereby helped to amplify the protest from the local to the global scale, with people who never experienced direct contact with the animal identifying with it, and protesting his elimination. Killing such a personalized animal was perceived as misjudged, even if it might be correct from an impersonal ethical standpoint.

The Zoo apparently did not anticipate the degree of damage that this particular elimination of a 'surplus' animal would have on its legitimacy. The damage was compounded by the way Marius was dispatched and children were exposed to the treatment of its carcass.

The controversy regarding the elimination of Marius can be seen as provoked by incongruities implicit in the institutional structure of contemporary zoos: conservation, research, education and entertainment; zoos are managed with a view to efficiency and profitability. Their multiple roles lead them to display conflicting attitudes to their animals. As depositories and breeding facilities they have a neutral attitude to their animals, favouring those that maximize genetic diversity to ensure the long-term viability of endangered species. As business establishments, they have to look at animals as resources in their quest for profitability. However, as leisure and entertainment establishments, they have to display a caring attitude to the animals in their custody, and often emphasize their individuality in order to enhance their attractiveness to potential visitors. In the case of Marius, there was a switch in the attitude displayed by the Zoo, which has been vividly demonstrated in the change of his status in course of the process of his elimination: when he was young, the Zoo sought to personalize him as a cute pet; but when he grew up, the Zoo decided to eliminate him as a 'surplus' animal on general, impersonal considerations. Once killed, he became during the performance of the public dissection a specimen of his species. Once this was over, he was turned into mere meat for feeding carnivorous animals. The Zoo demonstrated a complete lack of respect for Marius, his dead body and his memory. The resulting dissonance has incited the public uproar, and turned the elimination of Marius, the giraffe, into a minor *cause célèbre*.

Our critical analysis of the Copenhagen Zoo's conduct puts into question the high moral ground from which the Zoo and EAZA defended the decision to eliminate Marius. It raises the issue of the extent to which the professional ideology of the Zoo (as of Western zoos in general), actually serves to mask its financial interests as business enterprises. It insinuates that the Zoo was disingenuous in forwarding its reason to allow Marius's parents to mate, and had in fact allowed it for purely material reasons, namely to exploit Marius as a 'cash cow' as long as he was an attractive baby giraffe, while being fully aware that he would become a 'surplus' animal once, fully grown, he had lost his special attractiveness.

The elimination of Marius raises the broader issue of particularistic human-animal relations in animal ethics; while that ethic emerged in reaction to the prevalent particularism in evaluating animals, it went to the extreme of denying particularism any ethical standing even as it sought to articulate animal and human ethics, and despite the fact that in the latter, particularistic relations play a most significant role. We contend that positive duties were owed to Marius because of the higher moral standing he was given by the Zoo itself.

The elimination of Marius also touches upon specific ethical issues regarding the culling of 'surplus' animals in zoos. Some ethicists argue that zoos have a moral responsibility towards the captive animals in their custody, and hence are not entitled to eliminate them. The ethologist Marc Bekoff (cited in Cronin, 2014), argued that if animals are to live in zoos, there is really no excuse to kill them. Instead, zoos should serve the interests of every individual animal that lives in a zoo, not the people who come to visit them; these animals ought not to be bred if they are later to be killed.

Some animal rights advocates used the case of Marius to undermine a fundamental ideological tenet of the whole artificial breeding programme of EAZA, by questioning the practicality of the release of artificially bred animals into the wild. The Zoo has argued that Marius could not survive if released into the wild, but it apparently did not make any effort to seek a way to prepare him for such a transition. This practical disregard of a central tenet of the breeding programme strengthens the argument of critics that the ultimate purpose of such programmes is in fact an unrealizable utopian dream, which at least in

some instances – although not necessarily in the case of the Copenhagen Zoo – might serve to cover up the breeding of animals for trade with other institutions.

Some experts oppose breeding programmes in zoos, and hence implicitly the culling of surplus animals in the framework of such programmes, by documenting that captive breeding programmes are rarely successful (Laidlaw, 2001). Will Travers, the President of Born Free Foundation, an animal welfare organization that advocates keeping wildlife in the wild rather than in captive environments such as zoos, also recently put into question the credibility of zoo-based breeding programmes because there is little evidence of their success. Regarding the elimination of Marius within the framework of such a programme, he declared that 'Born Free, and the majority of the right-thinking world, is appalled at the killing of Marius the giraffe. The slaughter of healthy animals by zoos must stop' (Born Free Foundation, 2014).

The issues that have come to the fore over the death of Marius are related to broader issues regarding zoos and other popular captive animal institutions, which have been left untouched by tourism scholars. Some fundamental questions regarding these institutions have been recently addressed (see Carr & Cohen, 2011; Fennell, 2012b; Frost, 2011; Markwell, 2015), but much more work needs to be undertaken, especially in light of changing social attitudes (see Beckerman, 2015 in reference to SeaWorld). At the very core of these quandaries is the notion that is very difficult to accept – that economic and entertainment interests continue to take precedence over the interests of animals (Fennell, 2013b).

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