

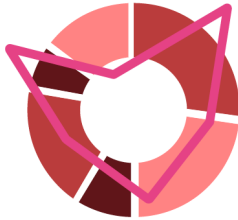
CAN FICTION HELP US THRIVE?

The Jacksons' Debate



MARQV NEVES

The Jacksons' Debate



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This work is part of an experimental initiative by THRIVE to promote reflection and dialogue on themes central to our mission, including ethical consumption, sentience, and sustainability. The Jacksons' Debate is a fictional narrative that aims to inspire thoughtful consideration of our relationship with other species and the ethical decisions that shape our world. As a work of fiction, it does not represent scientific research or definitive conclusions but rather serves as a creative exploration of key issues aligned with THRIVE's broader goals.

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Foreword by Dr. Sabine Brels, Founding Director of World Animal Justice

“A truly innovative fiction that deeply challenges the treatment of other animal species”

The Jacksons’ Debate by Marqv Neves is a thought-provoking novella that pushes the boundaries of speculative fiction to explore ethics, environmentalism, and the complexities of human-animal relationships. Through its unconventional narrative, the book invites readers to examine humanity from the perspective of an alien race, the Jacksons, whose sophisticated moral and philosophical inquiries expose the uncomfortable parallels between their debates and our own treatment of other animal species.

The story introduces the Jacksons as meticulous and ethically conscious beings grappling with humanity’s potential as a dietary resource while simultaneously engaging with orcas to understand interspecies ethics. Characters like Marvin Jackson, a nutritionist, and Grag and Gunnar, philosophers and ethicists, explore humanity’s physiology and societal constructs. Their experiments on human subjects, including Taylor Swift and Arthur Neves, are handled with care but lead to unforeseen

ethical dilemmas, such as societal upheaval caused by their absences. These scenarios highlight the unpredictable complexity of human behavior, sparking a debate among the Jacksons about the morality of their actions.

Simultaneously, the Jacksons' interactions with orcas, led by Glugi Jackson, use advanced telepathic technology to uncover the orcas' perspectives on human environmental impact. These interviews reveal profound insights into humanity's destructive tendencies, such as pollution and exploitative behaviors, juxtaposed with the orcas' harmonious and environmentally respectful culture. This contrast deepens the ethical quandary facing the Jacksons: Can humans be treated as a resource when they demonstrate such complex emotional and societal structures?

Perspectives for Animal Rights Advocacy

The novella offers a powerful framework for advocating animal rights by challenging the reader to confront their own anthropocentric biases. By reversing the roles—placing humans under the ethical scrutiny of a more advanced species—it reveals the ethical inconsistencies in our treatment of other sentient beings. The Jacksons' rigorous debates about whether humans can ethically be consumed echo the questions animal rights advocates pose about the morality of factory farming, animal experimentation, and habitat destruction.

The ethical lens of *The Jacksons' Debate* can inspire animal advocates to:

1. **Promote Empathy Through Perspective Shifts:** The Jacksons' confusion over human practices such as clothing and shame invites readers to reflect on how human judgments of other species' behaviors are often rooted in ignorance. This perspective fosters empathy and encourages a deeper understanding of non-human animals' needs and behaviors.
2. **Question Cultural Norms:** The novella critiques humanity's exploitation of the environment and other species through an alien lens, demonstrating how normalized practices, such as consuming animals or destroying ecosystems, can seem grotesque when viewed objectively. Advocates can use this approach to challenge societal norms and promote alternative, ethical ways of living.
3. **Address the Complexity of Sentience:** The Jacksons' discovery of human emotional and societal complexity parallels ongoing efforts to recognize the sentience of animals. The book supports the argument that animals are not commodities but individuals with intrinsic value, deserving of rights and protection.

Challenging Animal Treatment Worldwide

The Jacksons' Debate provides critical perspectives and tools to support animal rights advocacy:

- **Ethical Frameworks:** The Jacksons' meticulous ethical discussions can inspire frameworks for assessing the morality of animal-related policies and practices, ensuring that decisions are grounded in respect for sentience and autonomy.
- **Public Engagement:** The story's speculative fiction ap-

proach makes it accessible and engaging, allowing advocates to reach a broader audience by encouraging readers to question the status quo through creative storytelling.

- **Intersectional Advocacy:** By exploring parallels between human exploitation and animal suffering, the novella bridges the gap between environmental, social justice, and animal rights movements, reinforcing the interconnectedness of these issues.

A Call to Reflect and Act

The author masterfully uses speculative fiction to critique anthropocentrism and challenge readers' assumptions about ethical consumption. The Jacksons' debates mirror real-world discussions about animal rights, sustainable living, and the moral responsibilities of advanced societies. Their confusion over human behaviors underscores how alien our practices can appear when viewed through an objective lens, prompting readers to reflect on their own biases.

Ultimately, *The Jacksons' Debate* succeeds as both a literary and philosophical work. For animal rights advocates and movements, it is not just a story—it is a tool for reflection and action. It challenges us to reconsider our treatment of other animal species, offering a blueprint for advancing ethical practices that prioritize the well-being of all sentient beings. By using fiction as a catalyst for ethical self-reflection, Neves empowers readers to envision a world where justice extends beyond humanity to all life forms.

Prologue

Have you ever felt utterly, irrevocably insignificant? Like a particularly dull pebble on a beach teeming with infinitely more fascinating pebbles? We're not talking ironic pebbles here, or pebbles pondering their place in some grand cosmic design — those are far too busy being profound. No, we're talking about those regular, unremarkable pebbles completely oblivious to their own inherent pebbleness.

That feeling, that quiet, unsettling sense of being thoroughly, utterly ordinary — that's a starting point for what we're about to delve into. Brace yourself. This isn't your standard tale of valiant humans facing the cosmos armed with laser pistols and wry witticisms. This...is something far stranger, far more introspective.

The question isn't "What's out there?"

But rather: "What happens when what's out there...is deciding what to do with what's in here?"

Yes, you. Reading this. You're the "in here" part of the equation. And if you're expecting the kind of intergalactic encounter where the aliens show up and conveniently think, act, and break down

complex moral dilemmas in a way easily digestible to the human palate... well, that's simply not on the menu.

This book doesn't offer those comforts.

Because the central uncomfortable truth is this: When it comes to interspecies relations — and by “interspecies” we really mean “everything that isn't human” — the monkeys don't get a say. The fish don't get a say. The pandas, the squirrels, the earth-worms — they all exist in a world meticulously shaped and reshaped by human decisions, yet they have no voice in the matter. Their fates are sealed by the whims, values, and sometimes the sheer capriciousness of human discretion.

Humans, with their remarkable ability to narrativize, create hierarchies of worthiness among non-human beings. Consider the pandas, with their adorable, black-and-white countenances. These creatures are often the poster children of conservation efforts, their cuteness a currency that buys them a stay of execution in a world where many species are not so fortunate. Yet, have you ever pondered how odd it might seem to the pandas themselves, if they were aware of the reasons behind their protected status? Would they find it curious, perhaps even unsettling, that their survival hinges on human perceptions of their aesthetic appeal?

Now, contrast this with the plight of the fish. For centuries, humans have debated the sentience of fish, oscillating between seeing them as cold, unfeeling creatures and recognizing the subtle complexities of their behaviors. The fish, silently swimming through their watery realms, are entirely at the mercy

of these debates, their worth and the moral considerations extended to them dictated solely by human discourse.

This is the crux of the matter: the inherent imbalance in who gets to have a say. Humans construct narratives around their own understanding, telling themselves comforting stories where they're the protagonists, the heroes, even when the evidence suggests they're more akin to that one guy at the galactic house party who spills the cosmic dip on the sentient rug and then tries to play it cool.

And now, consider if the roles were reversed. Imagine if another species, far more advanced, looked upon humanity with the same scrutinizing gaze. Imagine if they were the ones deciding whether humans were worthy of moral consideration, whether our quirks and complexities rendered us deserving of preservation or mere curiosities to be studied, commodified, or even consumed.

This story yanks the rug right out from under you.

The narrative you're about to engage with (or more accurately, be engaged by—remember, your vote's not exactly counting here)—takes as its starting point a radical shift in perspective. Or more precisely, the lack of it. You'll find no reassuring inner monologues from the “other.” No attempts to soften the edges of a stark truth: sometimes beings, regardless of how evolved or morally enlightened they believe themselves to be, don't grant much thought at all to the “lesser” creatures under their metaphorical microscopes.

The reader's role here is an unsettling one. You become acutely aware of your own inherent human-ness, yearning for a voice, a platform to explain, justify, narrativize. But this story denies you that comfort. You're left to wrestle with the profound discomfort of not knowing "why."

The lack of readily available answers forces an unsettling kind of introspection. You become, in a sense, that pebble on the beach—observed, considered, acted upon—but never truly understood. And within that silence, a disturbing thought might just take root:

What if that's the point of the story all along?

1

The Ethical Dilemma of Human Meatballs

The grand hall of the Jacksons' Academy hummed with a low, pervasive frequency. It wasn't a sound that human ears could detect, but to the Jacksons, interconnected as they were through their intricate telepathic network, it was as palpable as the gentle pressure of their methane-rich atmosphere. Each thought, each observation, each subtle nuance of emotion, rippled across their collective consciousness, creating a symphony of data streams and analytical murmurs that filled the vast chamber.

At the center of the hall, a series of holographic displays flickered to life, bathing the assembled Jacksons in a cool, blue light. Graphs, charts, and anatomical diagrams shimmered in the air, their intricate details scrutinized by hundreds of multifaceted eyes. The air itself seemed to crackle with a subtle electrostatic charge, a testament to the intense mental energy that permeated the room.

The year was 2031. The Jacksons, masters of logic and efficiency, architects of a society that prided itself on harmony and sustainability, found themselves facing a dilemma that defied easy categorization. It wasn't a planetary crisis, a technological malfunction, or even a particularly perplexing mathematical theorem. It was a question of...diet.

The source of this dietary quandary? Humans.

The very notion of consuming these strange, seemingly illogical creatures from a nearby planet had sparked a wave of debate that rippled through Jacksonsonville's telepathic network, unsettling the usually calm waters of their collective consciousness.

The origin of this unsettling culinary proposition could be traced back to the meticulously organized lab of Marvin Jackson, Jacksonsonville's most esteemed nutritionist. Marvin, a Jackson known for his relentless pursuit of efficiency and his unwavering faith in data-driven solutions, had spent countless rotations studying the intricacies of Jacksonian metabolism. His pioneering work in bio-engineered fungi cultivation had, for a time, solved their previous dietary crisis, leading to the creation of Fungihsonville, the orbital station that housed their carefully curated ecosystem of edible fungi.

But even the most meticulously planned systems are susceptible to unforeseen variables.

The Jacksons, for all their advanced technology and interstellar wisdom, had a rather...unfortunate Achilles' heel. Their digestive systems, while capable of processing a bewildering array of organic compounds, were notoriously sensitive to unfamiliar

bacteria. This presented a rather significant obstacle when it came to exploring new culinary horizons.

Direct contact with sentient species, even for the purpose of a friendly inquiry about the potential palatability of their flesh, was strictly forbidden by the Non-Interference Agreement, a cornerstone of Jacksonian ethics. This left them with a rather limited menu of options when it came to diversifying their diet. Procuring biological samples from deceased individuals for scientific research, however, was deemed perfectly acceptable.

Marvin, ever the pragmatist, saw an opportunity within these ethical constraints. When reports of a subtle but persistent decline in Jacksonian health began circulating through the network, he immediately initiated a new research project. He requisitioned tissue samples from a variety of deceased organisms, carefully cataloguing their nutritional content and analyzing their compatibility with Jacksonian physiology.

His lab, a model of efficiency and sterility, hummed with the low thrum of advanced analytical equipment. Holographic displays flickered with genetic sequences, molecular diagrams, and complex equations. Marvin, his brow furrowed in concentration, scrutinized the data streams, his three-fingered hands manipulating the controls with a practised ease.

It was during one of these late-night analysis sessions that Marvin stumbled upon a data point that would send ripples of both curiosity and unease through the Jacksonian network.

The subject of his current scrutiny wasn't a particularly exotic

species of algae or a newly discovered strain of subterranean fungi, but a rather...unremarkable organism from a planet designated as Earth.

Marvin, his multifaceted eyes gleaming with a newfound intensity, activated a telepathic connection to the planetary network. "Colleagues," he announced, his voice a calm, steady frequency that resonated in the minds of every Jackson on Jacksonsonville, "I believe I've found a solution to our nutritional dilemma."

"It all began quite innocently, you see," Marvin had explained in a public broadcast. "We'd been analyzing the composition of various deceased organisms, strictly for research purposes, of course. Nothing untoward, purely a matter of due diligence before introducing any new food source to our delicate ecosystem."

"My latest analysis," he announced, "focused on a rather... unremarkable species from a planet designated as Earth. They call themselves 'humans'."

A holographic image of a human, meticulously rendered from Marvin's scans, materialized above the central console in his lab. The Jacksons across the planet observed with detached curiosity. The human, with its soft, fleshy exterior and its rather inefficient bipedal locomotion, didn't appear particularly threatening or noteworthy.

But as Marvin delved deeper into the data, a startling pattern emerged, a series of correlations that defied their initial expectations.

“The humans,” he’d announced, his normally calm telepathic voice tinged with a flicker of excitement, “possess a remarkably high concentration of a particular protein that appears to have a synergistic effect with our existing dietary regime. In simpler terms, my colleagues, they’re a nutritional wonder.”

Within nanorotations, Marvin’s announcement had circulated throughout the Jacksonian network, triggering a surge of data requests and analytical inquiries. Holographic displays across the planet flickered with cross-referenced data streams, population statistics, and projections of potential nutritional benefits.

Adhering to the Jacksons’ strict ethical guidelines, Marvin’s team conducted the initial trials using a limited supply of ethically procured human tissue. They developed a prototype food product — a spherical, protein-rich composite, meticulously calibrated for optimal Jacksonian digestion. The trials involved a controlled group of volunteer subjects, with comprehensive monitoring of their physiological responses, energy levels, and cognitive function. Preliminary analyses of the data exceeded expectations, indicating a 97.8% compatibility rate with existing metabolic pathways.

Further analysis of the trial data revealed an unexpected benefit: the human-derived meatball exhibited a 99.2% digestibility rate, even among Jacksonian subjects with a history of gastrointestinal sensitivity.

Marvin, encouraged by the positive trial results and the network’s evident interest, began to formulate a comprehensive plan. He envisioned a system of controlled cultivation, meticu-

lously designed to maximize the nutritional benefits of human-derived meatballs while adhering to the Jacksons' strict ethical guidelines.

He projected a detailed proposal onto the network, his holographic diagrams and data streams illuminating countless screens across Jacksonsonville. "Colleagues," he addressed the assembly, his telepathic voice resonating with calm confidence, "Imagine a future where our energy levels are consistently optimal, where digestive discomfort is a distant memory, where our physical vitality matches our intellectual prowess. The solution, I believe, lies in the sustainable and ethically sound utilization of human-derived nutrients."

This proposition, however, did not trigger a wave of universal approval. Subtle ripples of unease and dissent began to emerge within the network, a counterpoint to the prevailing current of pragmatic acceptance.

Grag Jackson, his brow furrowed as he reviewed the data streams pulsing through the network, felt a growing sense of unease. The proposed solution, while logically sound and seemingly efficient, triggered a cascade of warning signals within his meticulously organized mind.

Grag, a researcher renowned for his cautious nature and his unwavering adherence to the Precautionary Principle, had devoted his long lifespan to the study of other species. He'd meticulously documented countless examples of sentient life across the galaxy, each with its own unique evolutionary trajectory, its own complex set of behaviors, its own balance between instinct

and consciousness.

The humans, however, presented a series of anomalies that defied Grag's attempts at categorization. His long-range observations, meticulously documented over countless rotations, revealed a species seemingly driven by self-destructive impulses. They constructed sprawling cities that choked their atmosphere with noxious fumes, engaged in violent conflicts over abstract ideologies, and exhibited an insatiable hunger for material possessions that offered no discernible evolutionary advantage. Their actions, when analyzed through the lens of Jacksonian logic, were a paradox, a chaotic equation with no apparent solution.

Grag acknowledged the patterns, the meticulously documented evidence of their self-destructive behavior. He knew that the sum of their knowledge, while impressive, was dwarfed by the vast expanse of the unknown. Their understanding of the universe, of life itself, was a perpetually evolving, each new discovery revealing threads they had yet to imagine. Grag, for all his years of research, recognized the inherent limitations of their methods.

Was it possible, he wondered, that their current understanding of sentience was simply inadequate when applied to such a perplexing species? Could their methods of observation and analysis, so effective for categorizing other life forms, be missing a crucial dimension of the human experience? To base such a momentous decision solely on their current, admittedly limited, understanding felt...reckless.

“Marvin, my esteemed colleague,” Grag had countered in a public broadcast, his thoughts pulsing with a soft amber light of concern, “while I admire your ingenuity, I believe we must proceed with caution. The humans, for all their flaws, may possess a level of sentience that we have yet to fully comprehend. To consume them without a thorough understanding of their nature would be a grave ethical transgression, a stain on our collective conscience.”

Grag’s cautionary note resonated through the network, triggering a cascade of analytical inquiries and counter-arguments. Holographic displays flickered with data streams, philosophical treatises, and historical precedents, as the Jacksons engaged in a planet-wide debate. Could sentience be definitively measured? Was it a function of logical processing power, the ability to communicate complex ideas, or something more elusive, something that defied their current understanding?

The Jacksons, for all their mastery of science and technology, had yet to fully unravel the enigma of consciousness. They could deconstruct the building blocks of matter, manipulate the flow of energy, and chart the course of celestial bodies with impeccable precision. But the origin and nature of consciousness remained a persistent mystery.

The debate raged on, splitting the Jacksonian community into factions. The pragmatists, led by Marvin, argued for expediency. The humans were a resource, plain and simple, a solution to a pressing problem. The precautionary principle advocates, spearheaded by Grag, urged caution. They demanded a deeper understanding of human nature before making a decision that

could have irreversible consequences.

Caught in the crossfire of this ethical storm were the children of Jacksonsonville. The Jacksons, unlike humans, did not reproduce through biological means. They were a product of advanced bio-engineering, their consciousness nurtured in specialized incubation chambers. The process was meticulous, ensuring that each new generation inherited the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of their predecessors.

However, this process was also energy-intensive, requiring a steady supply of nutrients to fuel the incubation chambers and to sustain the developing consciousnesses. The Jacksons' traditional diet, based primarily on a species of highly intelligent fungi, had served them well for centuries. But the recent discovery of the fungi's potential sentience, coupled with the gradual decline in the Jacksons' physical capabilities, had forced them to seek alternative sources of nourishment.

Marvin's initial research was conducted with the utmost respect for the Non-Interference Agreement, he had relied on ethically acquired human remains. But the promising results of his meatball trials had sparked a new line of inquiry. The reliance on deceased individuals, he realized, presented a logistical bottleneck. Decomposition, while a fascinating natural process, was hardly conducive to the efficient, large-scale production of high-quality foodstuffs.

The solution, as Marvin saw it, was a simple matter of optimization. Why wait for nature's inefficient decomposition process when they possessed the technology to cultivate human tissue

directly? Why rely on the limited supply of ethically acquired remains when a vast, self-replenishing source was readily available just a few light-years away? The question, posed to the Jacksonian network with a detached, almost clinical curiosity, was this: Could their ethical framework, so carefully crafted to guide their interactions with other species, accommodate such a...pragmatic approach?

The Jacksons Institute of Childcare, became a battleground for this ethical war. Some caregivers, convinced by Marvin's arguments, embraced the human meatball solution with pragmatic zeal. They saw it as a necessary sacrifice, a means to an end, a way to ensure the well-being of their own children, even if it meant the demise of another species.

Others, swayed by Grag's concerns, resisted this new dietary regime with a fierce protectiveness. They argued that the Jacksons, as a species that valued compassion and wisdom, could not in good conscience condone the consumption of sentient beings. They pointed to the children's increasing telepathic sensitivity, their growing awareness of the interconnectedness of all life, as evidence that the Jacksons were evolving beyond the need for such a morally questionable solution.

The debate, conducted entirely through the silent hum of their interconnected network, continued to simmer. The Jacksons observed earth more keenly, with a detached curiosity, their collective mind struggling to reconcile the humans' chaotic and often contradictory actions with their own understanding of logic, efficiency, and evolutionary principles.

Krook Jackson, the president of the Academy, had been observing the unfolding debate rather dully. From his office atop the Academy's central spire, he had access to every data stream, every whispered argument, every flicker of uncertainty within the network. He found the whole situation rather...tiresome. The Jacksons, for all their intellectual prowess, had a tendency to overthink even the simplest of matters.

“Well, now then,” Krooks drawled in a public address, “aren't we in a right pickle? Seems like our esteemed colleagues are having a bit of a moral meltdown over a bunch of...well, let's just say they're not exactly the sharpest tools in the cosmic shed, are they? Running about in circles, covering themselves in bits of brightly colored fabric, shouting at each other about things that don't even exist. Honestly, it's enough to make you wonder if they've got a loose wire or two up there, in that...what do they call it? Ah yes, the 'brain'.”

Krook paused, allowing his sarcasm to hang in the air. He found it rather ironic, the Jacksons agonizing over the ethics of consuming a species that seemed hell-bent on consuming itself. But, of course, as president of the Academy, he had to maintain a certain level of decorum, at least publicly. Privately, however, he couldn't resist a little telepathic chuckle at the sheer absurdity of it all.

“Now, don't get me wrong, colleagues,” he continued, his voice dripping with faux-sincerity, “I'm all for ethical considerations. We wouldn't want to be accused of being...well, you know...gastronomically challenged, would we? But let's not lose sight of the bigger picture, shall we? Our resources are dwindling. Our

young ones are getting a bit... fragile, shall we say? And here we have this... abundant supply of... nutrients, just ripe for the taking. Seems like a perfectly logical solution to me. But then again, what do I know? I'm just a humble chairman, shackled to this administrative post, burdened with the tedious task of guiding you lot towards enlightenment.”

Krook's address, broadcast across the network with a calculated blend of logic and subtle persuasion, shifted the tide of the debate. The anxieties of those who had expressed concern about the ethical implications of consuming humans were quickly overshadowed by a wave of pragmatic acceptance. The data, after all, was compelling.

Marvin, emboldened by the collective shift towards acceptance, expanded his research efforts. He established a dedicated team of geneticists, bio-engineers, and nutritionists, tasked with optimizing the cultivation process and developing a range of human-derived food products that would meet the diverse dietary needs of the Jacksonian population. The results, meticulously documented and disseminated across the network, only reinforced the practicality of his solution.

On Earth, billions of humans went about their lives, oblivious to the fact that their very existence was being debated by a committee of highly evolved aliens with a fondness for data analysis and a rather unsettling approach to dietary planning. Their routines, their conflicts, their triumphs and tragedies — all meticulously documented, analyzed, and categorized by the Jacksons. Some humans, those who happened to be particularly high in protein or possessed a desirable omega-3 fatty acid

profile, might have felt a slight chill, a cosmic shiver down their spines. But for the most part, they remained blissfully unaware, continuing to play out the messy, illogical symphony of their existence, blissfully ignorant of the fact that their fate hung in the balance.

Editorial Reviews

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“In *The Jackson’s Debate*, Marqv Neves delivers a thought-provoking and humorous exploration of the ethics of eating animals. Set in an alien world, this short novel challenges human supremacy, forcing us to rethink our place in the world and leaving us feeling oddly alien to ourselves.

The premise is both simple and profound: a group of highly intelligent extraterrestrials debates whether humans should be harvested for consumption. On the one side are those who believe that, given the nutritional crisis impacting these aliens, consuming irrational, destructive creatures like humans would not violate their ethical principles if done correctly. On the other

side, some take a more cautious approach, advocating for further studying human consciousness before making any decisions.

One of the book's most captivating aspects is the way aliens view nonhuman animals. Animals are considered sentient, rational beings capable of deep thought and communication. At one point, the aliens interview orcas, who offer their candid views about humans. The orcas describe us as chaotic, destructive, and lacking communication skills. This conversation provides a sharp critique of human behavior, framing us as a species that often misunderstands other animals, nature, and the things that truly matter.

This section is particularly timely, given recent scientific advances in communicating with cetaceans. Perhaps, in the near future, we will be able to ask whales and dolphins what they think of us. Will we listen if they tell us that the noise and speed from our vessels, our interference with their habitats, our fishing practices, oil extraction, and other practices cause distress to their communities? Will we stop these practices? Humans rarely pause to consider what other animals think of us. But we should, as this exercise could reveal the true scale of our destructive impact on animals and their communities.

As the aliens deliberate, the reader is subtly invited to adopt their perspective—to see the human species not as the center of the universe but as one species among many, perhaps not even the most rational or intelligent. The cleverness of Neves's writing lies in how it shifts the reader's point of view. By immersing us in the aliens' debate, the reader begins to feel alien themselves as though our human ways—our belief in superiority, our obsession

with consumption, our pollution, and our disregard for other animals and nature—are no longer familiar but strange and absurd. We are confronted with our own assumptions about what it means to be human and what it means to *not* be human. It encourages readers to consider whether we truly are the rational, superior beings we imagine ourselves to be.

For anyone interested in the ethics of eating animals or in challenging the long-standing narrative of human supremacy, this book is a must-read. It's entertaining, accessible, and thought-provoking—perfect for anyone curious about their place in the world and how we relate to the animals with whom we share it. Fiction like this, along with the discussions it sparks, is a crucial way to challenge human supremacy, a belief so entrenched in society that literature, music, art, theater, and film are necessary tools to combat it and help us realize that we share the planet with many other sentient beings.”

Vanessa Amoroso— <https://www.linkedin.com/in/vanessaamoroso/>

Head of Wild Animals in Trade, FOUR PAWS International; Vice Chair at Freedom for Animals

“Marqv Neves’ *The Jacksons’ Debate* is a thoughtful and provocative reflection on morality and interspecies ethics, told through the eyes of a highly advanced alien society grappling with an important question: should humans be seen as equals – or a resource? Not just for animal lovers and advocates, but for

all, it's a story that shines a light on our own treatment of the creatures we share this world with.

The ethical discussions in the book mirror humanity's often uncomfortable debates about animal sentience and worth. The Jacksons' analysis of humans – their self-destructive habits and environmental harm – calls into question our own justifications for continuing to exploit animals. It's a sobering reminder of how easily power can obscure compassion.

What makes this story so poignant is the Jacksons' respect for life. Their thoughtful coexistence with their home's species highlights how humans, by contrast, often prioritize convenience over care. Their use of the Precautionary Principle – a commitment to act with caution when the impact is uncertain – is a beautiful and humbling example of ethical integrity.

This novella doesn't just challenge us; it invites us to reimagine what coexistence could look like if driven by understanding, empathy and kindness. It's a powerful, inspiring read for those passionate about animals and the Earth.”

By Taylor Waters — <https://www.linkedin.com/in/taylor-waters/>

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A Thought-Provoking Look at Ethical Dilemmas: My Take on The Jacksons' Debate

As an animal lawyer and deontologist, The Jacksons' Debate by Marqy Neves left me both fascinated and unsettled. This

speculative fiction flips the ethical script by putting humanity under the moral microscope of an alien species, forcing readers to confront uncomfortable truths about our treatment of non-human animals.

The premise—a society of advanced telepathic beings, the Jacksons, debating whether humans should be ethically consumed as food—is a provocative lens through which Neves critiques speciesism. The Jacksons' deliberations, particularly their attempt to define a “scale of sentience,” hit close to home. It's eerily reminiscent of the arbitrary hierarchies we create to justify how we treat animals. As someone who works within legal frameworks meant to protect animals, I found myself reflecting on how often those frameworks are molded more by human convenience than by genuine respect for animal rights.

One aspect I found especially compelling was the character of Grag Jackson, who champions the Precautionary Principle. His call for restraint and further understanding of human sentience aligns with deontological ethics, where the duty to respect beings with intrinsic worth is paramount. The tension between Grag's caution and the more pragmatic (and morally dubious) arguments of his colleague Marvin serves as a brilliant parallel to real-world debates about how we justify exploiting animals for food, entertainment, or research.

The satirical elements of the book are sharp and effective. The Jacksons' bewilderment at human fashion trends, wastefulness, and contradictory behaviors often had me chuckling in recognition. Yet, that humor is undercut by the sobering realization of how these critiques mirror our larger societal

failings, particularly in our relationship with the environment and other species.

For me, the book's greatest strength lies in its ability to evoke empathy through reversal. By positioning humans as the subject of moral debate, it forces us to confront how little voice we give to animals in decisions that shape their lives. It's a discomforting thought, but one that feels necessary.

If I had one critique, it's that the book sometimes leans so heavily into its thought experiment that the narrative can feel secondary. But perhaps that's the point. This isn't a story designed to comfort; it's meant to challenge and provoke, and it succeeds on those terms.

As someone deeply invested in both animal rights and ethical philosophy, I found *The Jacksons' Debate* to be a brilliant and unsettling reflection on the inconsistencies of human morality. It's a must-read for anyone willing to wrestle with the uncomfortable question: What would our actions look like under the scrutiny of a truly impartial gaze?

By Daniel Clark — <https://www.linkedin.com/in/daniel-clark-writer/>

Writer, Editor, Translator; Animal Rights Advocate; BA and MPhil from the University of Cambridge.

“This is not a novella in the traditional sense but a carefully constructed ethical mirror. By forcing us to view our own species from an alien perspective, marqv neves achieves a far-reaching critique of human supremacy. This is essay-as-story, where the narrative serves as a vehicle for profound philosophical engagement. The effect is familiar and deeply unsettling.

The Jacksons' Debate is a series of debates about eating another species. It is also an unflinching examination of the limits of human power. In his rigorous and riveting style, the author works through the ethical complexities involved in breeding, raising, slaughtering and eating non-human animals through an alien lens. In short, he passes under the microscope what is normally hidden from the consumer's sight.

Can our systematic treatment of other species ever be justified? Some Jacksons think so, as many humans do today. Yet neves asks us to look anew at the age-old debate. Stepping outside one's own biases can illuminate the strangeness in our everyday actions and beliefs. For example, the Jacksons' bewilderment at human clothing becomes a brilliant exploration of how we dismiss other species' behaviours as irrational simply because we fail to understand them.

Speculative fiction is an ideal genre through which to explore the ethical implications of eating animals. What the author eschews in narrative convention, he makes up for with his depth of ideas. That is not to say that the novella is aimed only at those with a philosophy degree; any reader who is prepared to engage with ethics, to sit with uncomfortable parallels and question long-held assumptions will be enriched by reading it.

Overall, *The Jacksons' Debate* succeeds not despite its philosophical bent but because of it. The novella represents a choice to use fiction as a medium for ethical debate. For readers willing to engage with its deeper questions, *The Jacksons' Debate* offers a mind-bending experiment in self-reflection.”

Marina Rebelo—<https://www.linkedin.com/in/your-ghostwriter/>

Author Of Crystal Tear

“The Jackson’s Debate is not just a simple novella but a profound philosophical narrative. By analysing the Human Race through the perspective of highly conscious aliens, Neves makes us question the absurdities and contradictions inherent in our daily lives. Whether it be our clothing habits or dietary choices, society seems to be playing a crucial role in how we live our lives and take care of our planet. This is pushing the reader to reconsider our ethics and the rational behind our actions. Each chapter has its own set of ethical questions, from sustainability to veganism or our fear of death.

Neves challenges us to scrutinise the reasons we provide for our treatment of other earthly species, questioning whether our perceived superiority is in natural order or simply a human made belief.

The aliens are very logic centric, and although their conscious is heightened, it makes us question what truly makes a sentient

being. Is our consciousness the centre of our superiority or is it the society we created over the centuries, sculpting us into those irrational and non logical beings?

The philosophical aspect of the book confronts readers with uncomfortable truths and asks them to reassess their beliefs and practices. Rather than giving us full answers, Neves let us make our own decisions by opening up a debate on the human race and on what defines us as a species. This introspection leaves the reader with one question: Are we truly worthy of the planet we inhabit, or have we taken advantage of a presents from the universe (or a higher entity) without ever being grateful for this gift?

Less of a storytelling piece, more of a philosophy thesis, this book is a fantastic way to analyse what we have become as a species and what makes us worthy of living.”

Dr Sabine Brels - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sabine-brels/>

Director of [World Animal Justice](#)

“An extraordinary fusion of imagination and ethics, this ground-breaking fiction compels us to confront the silent injustices inflicted upon other species, inspiring a bold rethinking of humanity’s role in creating a world of true compassion and justice for all living beings.”

Micheall Hill - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/michael-hill-52a8881a7/>

Lead Researcher at the THRIVE Project

Anthropocentrism and the way we view non-human animals are closely linked, with everything from extinction of species to biodiversity threats, to using animals for human purposes are linked to this. In this book 'The Jackson's Debate' the depiction of an alien species perceiving humans only as for their consumption illuminates the way that humans can at times perceive animal species, and showcases this issue through a fictional lens. The ethical considerations of one individual also highlights the concerns posed in the modern world, linked to anthropocentrism and how we as humans not only may cause the issue, but are capable of resolving it, through ethical deliberation, and recognising the incentives, both environmental and social for doing so.

At THRIVE Project we recognise the importance of this issue and through the use of the THRIVE Framework, and using the best science we showcase and illuminate paths forward for a thrivable future. Thrivability goes beyond mere sustainability, it is about not just break-even survival, it is about creating a prosperous and thrivable world for the future.

This issue as discussed within this book is important to be addressed, and is central to creating a Thrivable future! To learn more about the THRIVE Project, and the THRIVE Framework, visit our website, follow our webinar, podcast and blog series, you can also read our White Papers and Journal articles on the website.

<https://thrivabilitymatters.org/about-thrive-project/>

Afterword

As a law graduate and current Master's student in Sustainable Development at the University of Sussex, my main research topic revolves around human-animal relations, where I advocate for animal rights expansion. In this story, I aim to put this into perspective when an alien race philosophically discusses having humans as a food source. As I perceive it, most villains in the history of the world did not consider themselves to be villains, yet history has considered some to be and some not to be. Several paths have led us to cruelty and salvation; this story presents a quirky path that, understood as it is, may illuminate how oddly we might stumble into causing cruelty, even if considering ourselves ethical, advanced, sophisticated, and so on and so forth.

My aim with "The Jacksons Debate" is not to provide definitive answers to the ethical questions it raises, but rather to explore the complexities of those questions and the potential for bias even within a society that prides itself on being highly considerate and meticulous. The elongated philosophical debates are intentional, serving as a reflection of the Jacksons' personality and their tendency to engage in profound, sometimes rambling, discussions. The lack of a counterpoint perspective is also deliberate, highlighting the possibility of overlooking crucial aspects of reality, even when operating from a position of

perceived ethical superiority.

The story intentionally blends fiction with real scientific concepts to create a sense of plausibility and ground the narrative in a relatable context. This allows for a deeper exploration of the potential for constructing narratives that, while scientifically sound, may lead to morally questionable conclusions. The ultimate message is that scientific knowledge, while essential, does not necessarily dictate ethical imperatives.



About the Author

Marqv Neves is an advocate based in Rio de Janeiro, interested in exploring the ethical dimensions of coexistence. With a background in law and a master's in Sustainable Development from the University of Sussex, Marqv combines his legal expertise with his interest in fiction to challenge societal norms. He's also a researcher at the Thrive Project, where he contributes to building a future that recognizes and respects the rights of non-human beings.

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