

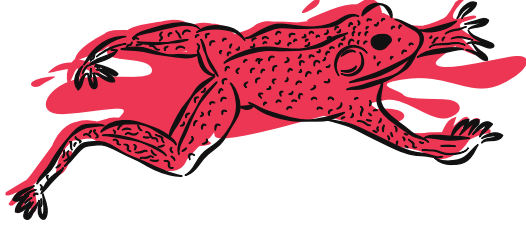


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Tarde, a handbook
of minimal and irrelevant
urban entanglements
Nov-Dec/2023 - ISSN: 2941-4393
DOI: 10.17605/OSF.IO/HVJX5

STORIES OF IRRELEVANT BEINGS

In Neu-Hohenschönhausen, east Berlin, hundreds of earthworms are killed over a shared pedestrian-bike lane crossing a park during springtime. Walkers and bikers enjoying the city's green areas swat the animals, sometimes even realizing their presence on the road. The wavy squashed bodies of the annelids quickly turn into texture, drawing a cemetery of irrelevant beings, often unnoticed or just worthless enough to people take the time to dodge them. The same situation happens with the frogs in Lübeck. The dark and flat shapes of many dead amphibians dried by the summer heat became a landscape nobody seemed to care about.



THE INSIGNIFICANT OTHERS

There is a narrow secondary street in Lübeck, northern Germany, that communicates a central avenue with a zone full of allotment gardens and a dog training club. Every summer, taking advantage of the good weather, people drive around that area to visit their portions of land, plant vegetables and flowers, and be in touch with nature. The site looks beautiful due to its leafy vegetation, blue sky, and sunny landscape. Others take their dogs into their vehicles and visit the club to socialize, train their pets, and let them play with their equals. The scenario is completed with dozens of tiny frogs trying to cross the road, dying on the pavement, and being crushed by the cars visiting the zone.



The concept of urban animals as migrants is highlighted in the significance and on-tology of care since, according to her, care could mean many things "to different people, in different situations." It may be an affection, a moral obligation, work, a burden, a joy, something we can learn, or something we just do. What she proposes is to follow care—or its absence—in practice. But, empirically speaking, what does taking care of or, in our case, not taking care of those insignificant others mean?

Marta Puig de la Bellacasa [4] highlights the ambivalence in the significance and on-tology of care since, according to her, care could mean many things "to different people, in different situations." It may be an affection, a moral obligation, work, a burden, a joy, something we can learn, or something we just do. What she proposes is to follow care—or its absence—in practice. But, empirically speaking, what does taking care of or, in our case, not taking care of those insignificant others mean?

In all the encounters introduced along with this number, there is a noticeable disregard for those beings with whom we have not created a solid (positive or negative) bond. We kill them neither because we fear or hate them, nor because we could get some kind of advantage depriving them of their existence. We do that mostly due to a strong lack of attention to what is around us, a careless attitude materialized, among other than-human relationships here described are framed by a (human) lack of attention to those others' lives and presence in the city.

This number of Tarde explores a third category of *othering* by focusing on the asymmetrical encounters between humans and a bunch of non-human animals that, in those particular contexts, do not represent either a detriment, a hazard, or a direct advantage to humans in terms of utility. In fact, the more-careless attitude materialized, among other than-human relationships here described are framed by a (human) lack of attention to those others' lives and presence in the city.

When Spring is getting hotter, hundreds of pavement ants start going out the sidewalk cracks around Müllerstraße in Wedding, east Berlin, to find new food sources. The ants are constantly emerging, creating small sandy anthills that are often destroyed, and the insects are crushed, by busy and distracted pedestrians. This story highlights a particular asymmetrical phenomenon regarding the ontological status of those others we pile inside the category of non-humans. If you want to expand this discussion, please, follow the ants.

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To consider animals as tools is a matter of utility. It happens when "urban animals are seen as useful to humans in some way they are often categorized as social or economic tools" [2]. Shingne proposes five sub-categories to classify them based on their usability: (a) animals used to move people and products; (b) livestock as meat; (c) livestock as industrial supplies; (d) animals to study public health; (e) animals to keep other undestriable animals away.

UNPACKING OTHERING

This handbook proposes a conceptual discussion regarding a particular set of beings inhabiting the city, what we call here *insignificant others*. That group comprises a heterogeneous collective of non-human animals whose common thread is to be irrelevant to humans. It focuses on human and non-human animal encounters in public spaces highlighting a particular type of relationship with others,—those that are not our equals—based on disregard.

Marie Carmen Shingne [1] problematizes *othering* as a strategy that could be used against non-human animal groups in the city [and to define] "denial of [their] sentience [and to define] urban space as human only." Shingne presents two categories to explore their *othering* condition: urban animals as (1) tools and as (2) immigrants.



ROADKILL

In Lübeck, near the road where frogs are smashed, a street separates a natural reserve from a low-density neighborhood. There is not much happening in the area, except for a similar dynamic of cars hitting animals, this time hedgehogs. Although the frequency and amount of dead hedgehogs are way inferior to the amphibians some streets away, the pavement is often painted with flattened small, and spiny corpses. Urban (and wild) animals smashed by cars on roads is a global phenomenon known as *roadkill*. There are registers and research coming from South America [5], Europe [6], and Oceania [7], compiling the deaths of animals hit by cars.

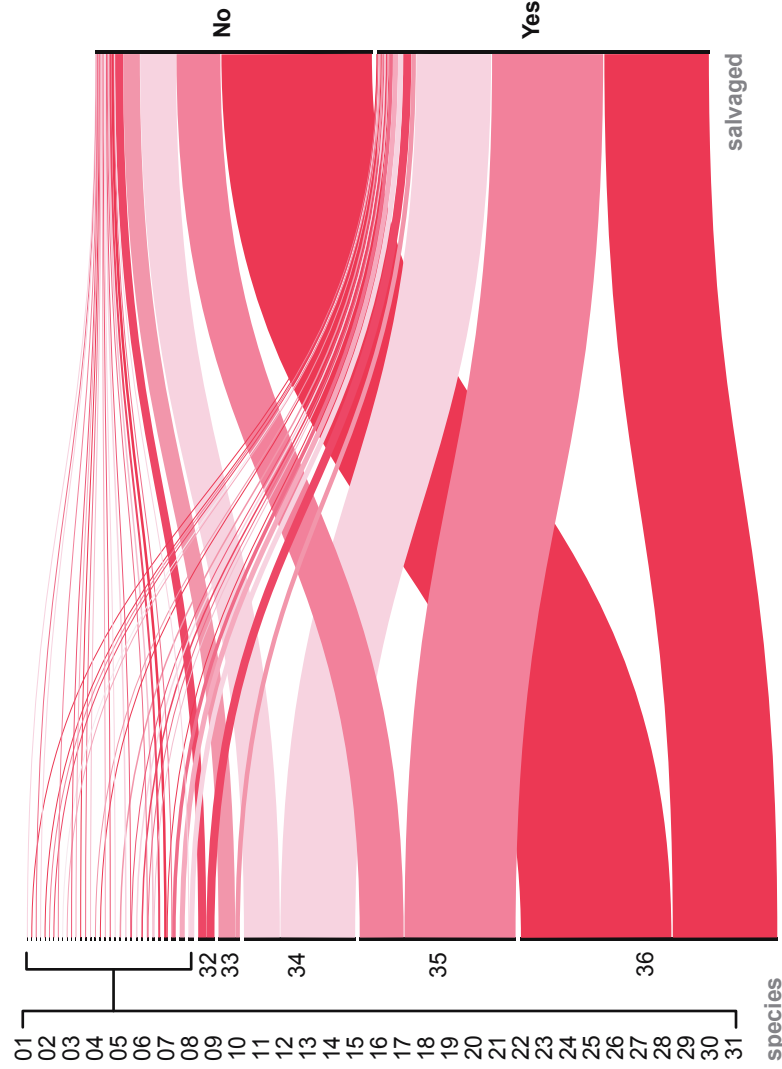
The difference between the data obtained from research and registers is that the first type was collected by a bunch of researchers that went to the field to count animal corpses. Meanwhile, the information from the registers was mainly obtained by compiling the reports

of those humans involved in the collisions. That methodological particularity is important because, due to insurance matters, the most human-animal incidents reported are those where a big animal —deer, moose, elk— was involved.

The Infographics below focus on roadkill data from Idaho, United States of America, during the first semester of 2023. The reason to chose Idaho is that they have one of the most detailed roadkill databases in the world. As introduced above, the casualties here illustrated were stated mainly by the humans involved. That situation makes us think there may be many more unreported dead animals that were insignificant enough to be counted.

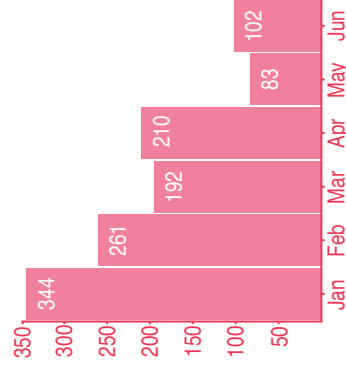
A similar exercise of visualizing roadkills, this time in Austria and with data collected by researchers, is available on our website.

IDAHO DEAD ANIMAL STOCKPILE *



- 01 Eastern Fox Squirrel (1)
- 02 North American Porcupine (1)
- 03 White-tailed Jack Rabbit (1)
- 04 Northern Raccoon (1)
- 05 Bighorn Sheep (1)
- 06 American Badger (1)
- 07 Striped Skunk (1)
- 08 Wolverine (1)
- 09 Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse (1)
- 10 Mountain Goat (1)
- 11 Red Squirrel (1)
- 12 Turkey Vulture (1)
- 13 Domestic Cat (2)
- 14 Canada Goose (2)
- 15 Red Fox (2)
- 16 Gray Wolf (2)
- 17 Ring-necked Pheasant (2)
- 18 Mallard (2)
- 19 Greater Sage-Grouse (2)
- 20 American Black Bear (3)
- 21 Barn Owl (3)
- 22 Common Raccoon (3)
- 23 Bobcat (3)
- 24 Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep (3)
- 25 Coyote (3)
- 26 American Beaver (4)
- 27 Bald Eagle (4)
- 28 Deer (7)
- 29 Mountain Lion, Cougar, or Puma (8)
- 30 Northern River Otter (10)
- 31 Wild Turkey (11)
- 32 Moose (32)
- 33 Pronghorn (42)
- 34 Elk (219)
- 35 White-tailed Deer (305)
- 36 Mule Deer (505)

* This roadkill index correlates all the dead species reported during the first six months of 2023 and the status of their corpses. The category “salvaged” refers to those bodies —or parts of them— that somehow were recovered from the road to be used, consumed, or disposed. The numbers at the end of each species are equivalent to the number of individuals reported



MONTHLY REPORT **

Don't forget to take a look online for a detailed description of how many individuals per species were reported and what does “salvaged” really mean.

** **Total of casualties: 1192.** Here, you can check the number of dead animals reported per month. Observe how the number of incidents increases in colder months.



Here, expand this exercise, find bibliography and related content.

tarde.info/
the-insignificant-others



GEORGSIMMEL
CENTER
FOR
METROPOLITAN
STUDIES

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This number has been curated by:
Christopher Kelty & Catherine Oliver

Tarde
ISSUE 02



FOR

CENTER

METROPOLITAN

STUDIES

Along with this number, we have explored how due to individual and structural human disregard for other beings, thousands of animals inhabiting or crossing urban spaces die every day.

Now, we propose a speculative exercise to imagine—by drawing or writing—what caring for those *insignificant others* means. You can use one of the following questions for inspiration, or going your way.

- What structural and collective mechanisms are required to implement to include those *others* in the city's dynamics safely?
- What individual actions are necessary to create urban spaces for everyone?

Don't forget to send us your creation!

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WHAT DOES CARE FOR THOSE INSIGNIFICANT OTHERS MEAN TO YOU?



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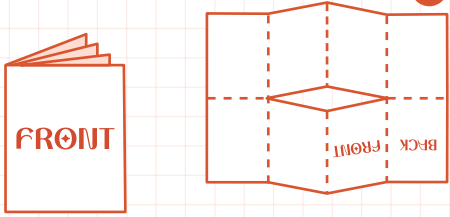
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PLACE TO EXPERIMENT

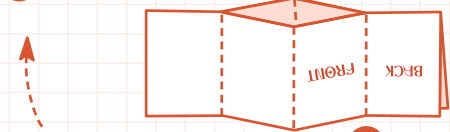
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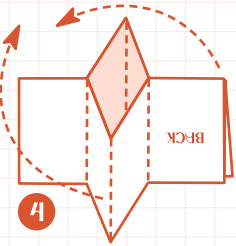
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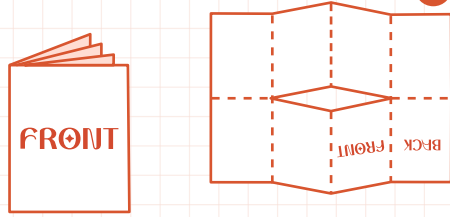
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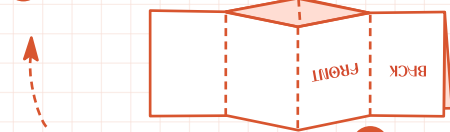
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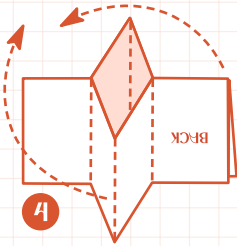
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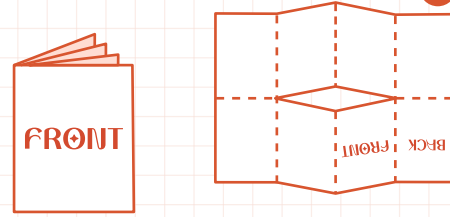
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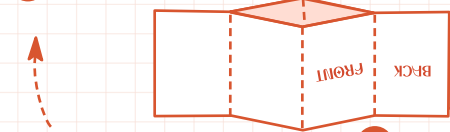
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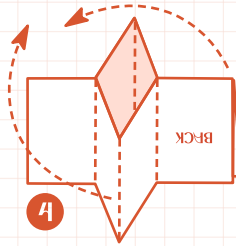
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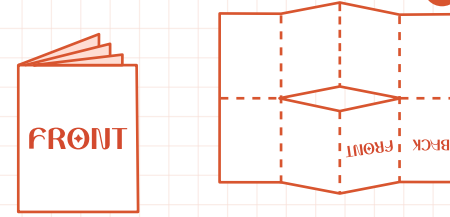
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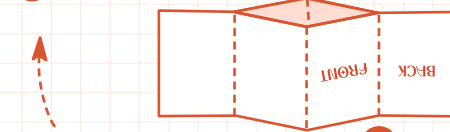
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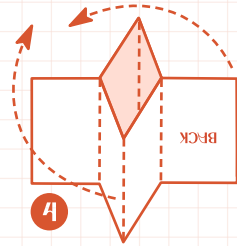
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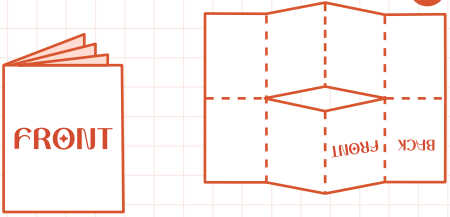
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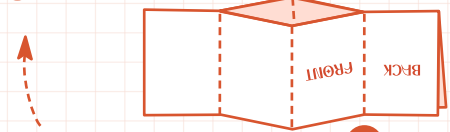
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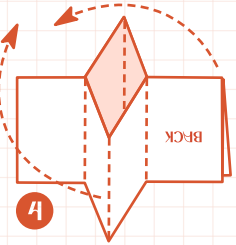
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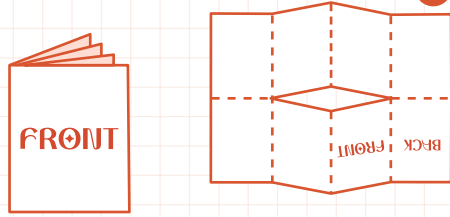
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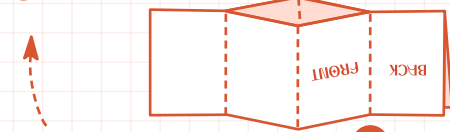
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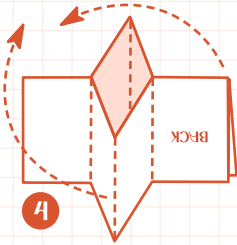
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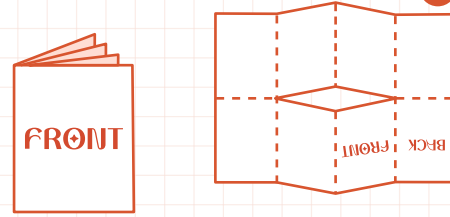
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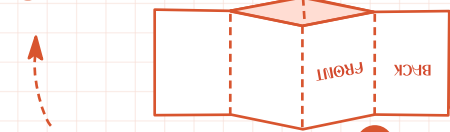
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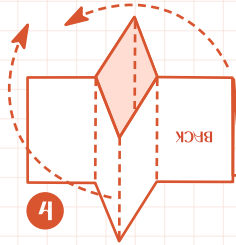
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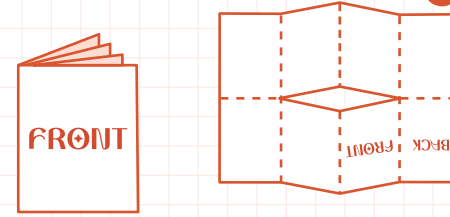
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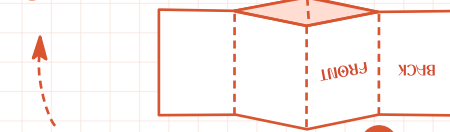
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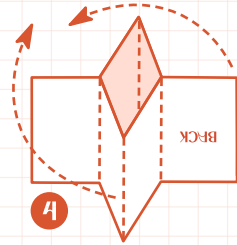
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