

SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLE

Introduction to the Special Issue: Multispecies security and personhood

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Abstract

The contributions to this Special Issue examine multispecies perspectives on the political dynamics of international life. Building on this theme, I consider the complex and manifold ways in which the subject of security can be understood in terms of more-than-human personhood. First, by thinking of more-than-human animals as phenomenally conscious persons, we might better appreciate the multispecies complexity of security as an agentic and affective experience. Second, attending to the spiritual character of certain indigenous articulations of personhood presses us to decipher how spiritual claims might inform moral and legal dimensions of multispecies security-seeking behaviour. To illustrate the significance of these moves, I first draw on more-than-human experiences of war, pathogenic viruses, and the global factory farm. I then explore conceptions of spiritual personhood in the context of Ojibwe responsibilities to protect wolves. These perspectives on personhood demonstrate possibilities for cultivating greater interest in the multispecies experience of security.

Keywords: Consciousness; COVID-19; Ma'iingan; Multispecies; Personhood; Security

Introduction

I believe *ma'iingan* is saying pay attention. That's what the spirits are saying.
Marvin Defoe¹

The contributions to this Special Issue generate a view of global security politics that foregrounds interspecies relations and multispecies perspectives. The collective emphasis on more-than-human concerns, resistance, and perspectives does not amount to a settled or straightforward theory of multispecies security but rather a collection of insights tied together by an inner theme of global security as already shaped by multispecies encounters, entanglements, and dynamics. This introduction article addresses and expands on these contributions by pursuing a more-than-human personhood conception of the subject of security.

Who counts as a person? is a persistent philosophical question in International Relations (IR) debates about state personhood.² But there is another strand of thought on personhood that is

¹US District Court (Western District of Wisconsin), Declaration Of Marvin Defoe, Civil Case No. 3:21-cv-00597, 1 October 2021, p. 6.

²Sean Fleming, 'Moral agents and legal persons: The ethics and the law of state responsibility', *International Theory*, 9:3 (2017), pp. 466–89; Nina C. Krickel-Choi, 'The embodied state: Why and how physical security matters for ontological security', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 25:1 (2022), pp. 159–81; Ben Holland, *The Moral Person of the State: Pufendorf, Sovereignty and Composite Politics* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017). For a very different account of personhood focused on images and trauma, see Jenny Edkins, 'Politics and personhood: Reflections on the portrait photograph', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 38:2 (2013), pp. 139–54.

rarely engaged with in IR: more-than-human personhood.³ Animal rights scholars have long debated variations of, and criteria for, personhood beyond humans.⁴ Political theorists have considered the utility of adopting the language of personhood within interspecies contexts.⁵ Environmental politics scholars have theorised collective personhood and examined global movements to secure legal rights for rivers.⁶ And there are several indigenous theories of and perspectives on more-than-human personhood.⁷ But how might the language of more-than-human personhood help reorient our sense of what security means? How might certain views of personhood help us grapple with – and better describe – the multispecies complexity of security as an agentic and affective experience? In addition to a view of personhood rooted in multispecies forms of intentionality and consciousness, how can attending to the spiritual character of certain indigenous articulations of personhood alert us to variations of more-than-human security? Shifting these more-than-human dimensions of personhood into the foreground provides an alternative means of describing a broader range of security relations and affective experiences.

While there has been increasing scholarship on more-than-human security,⁸ there are persistent questions surrounding the language used to conceptualise the subject of security.⁹ What would it mean, for example, to pose questions about the security of wolves in terms of personhood? The Global Indigenous Council Wolf Treaty, for instance, describes the wolf as ‘a teacher, a guardian, a clan guide – a relative’, as well as a holder of treaty rights.¹⁰ From this view, the meaning of wolves is approached through an interplay of overlapping ideas of intelligence, spirituality, and personhood. The wolf, in these terms, is a person with political standing and spiritual

³Throughout this article I use the term ‘more-than-human’ rather than ‘non-human’ to avoid writing of subjects and persons in the negative.

⁴Elisa Aaltola, ‘Personhood and animals’, *Environmental Ethics*, 30:2 (2008), pp. 175–93; David DeGrazia, ‘On the question of personhood beyond Homo sapiens’, in Peter Singer (ed.), *In Defense of Animals: The Second Wave* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 40–53; Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (2nd edn, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Gary L. Francione, *Animals as Persons: Essays on the Abolition of Animal Exploitation* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2008).

⁵Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Rights* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011). Donaldson and Kymlicka prefer to frame questions about interspecies relations in terms of selfhood rather than personhood, in part because of the latter’s exclusionary history and because they believe it directs us away from the pursuit of respecting inviolable rights. For legal theories of more-than-human personhood, see Steven M. Wise, ‘Nonhuman rights to personhood’, *Pace Environmental Law Review*, 30:3 (2013), pp. 1278–90; Angela Fernandez, ‘Not quite property, not quite persons: A quasi approach for nonhuman animals’, *Canadian Journal of Comparative and Contemporary Law*, 5 (2019), pp. 155–231.

⁶Rafi Youatt, ‘Personhood and the rights of nature: The new subjects of contemporary earth politics’, *International Political Sociology*, 11:1 (2017), pp. 39–54; Mihnea Tanasescu, ‘The rights of nature in Ecuador: The making of an idea’, *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, 70:6 (2013), pp. 846–61; Gwendolyn J. Gordon, ‘Environmental personhood’, *Columbia Journal of Environmental Law*, 43:1 (2018), pp. 49–91.

⁷Maneesha Deckha, ‘Unsettling anthropocentric legal systems: Reconciliation, indigenous laws, and animal personhood’, *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 41:1 (2020), pp. 77–97; Margaret Robinson, ‘Animal personhood in Mi’kmaq perspective’, *Societies*, 4:4 (2014), pp. 672–88.

⁸Erika Cudworth and Stephen Hobden, ‘Post-human security’, in Anthony Burke and Rita Parker (eds), *Global Insecurity* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 65–81; Rafi Youatt, *Interspecies Politics: Nature, Borders, States* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2020); Carolin Kaltofen, ‘Posthuman security’, in Birgit Schippers (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook to Rethinking Ethics in International Relations* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), pp. 367–76; Audra Mitchell, ‘Only human? A worldly approach to security’, *Security Dialogue*, 45:1 (2014), pp. 5–21.

⁹Matthew Leep, ‘Toxic entanglements: Multispecies politics, white phosphorus, and the Iraq War in Alaska’, *Review of International Studies*, this Special Issue (2022), available at: {doi:10.1017/S0260210522000158}. In this issue, for example, Leep describes certain spatiotemporal dimensions of war in terms of ancestral and multigenerational spaces for more-than-human agents and persons. See also Delf Rothe, ‘Global security in a posthuman age? IR and the Anthropocene challenge’, *E-IR* (13 October 2017); Erika Cudworth and Stephen Hobden, ‘Liberation for straw dogs? Old materialism, new materialism, and the challenge of an emancipatory posthumanism’, *Globalizations*, 12:1 (2015); Erika Cudworth and Stephen Hobden, *Posthuman International Relations: Complexity, Ecologism and Global Politics* (London, UK: Zed Books, 2011).

¹⁰Global Indigenous Council, ‘Wolf Treaty’, pp. 43, 6, available at: {https://www.globalindigenouscouncil.com/wolf-treaty}.

significance. In a recent plan specifying the ‘relationship between the Anishinaabeg and *ma'iingan* (wolves)’, more-than-human personhood perspectives are invoked by noting how

in the Ojibwe world view, determining the health of the *ma'iingan* population involves much more than simply determining the number that exist. Like human communities, the demographics of the population are also important, as social structure is critical in wolf packs, so that wolves, like their human relatives, can pass down teachings and properly raise their young.¹¹

From certain Ojibwe perspectives, articulations of wolf protection are not only expressions of sovereign and territorial authority or claims about the psychological personhood of wolves. They are a demonstration of more-than-human spiritual connections to wolf (*ma'iingan*) brothers and sisters,¹² described as ‘murdered and Indigenous *ma'iingan*’ in the legal and security context of challenging wolf hunts.¹³ These discursive practices and worldviews offer important insights into the experience of multispecies security. As I will suggest throughout this introduction, the language of personhood is a means of reflecting on the multiple and shifting meanings of who ‘we’ and others are (or might become) as global subjects. It is one step towards discovering new (and retracing forgotten) escape routes from anthropocentric forms of inquiry into the subject of security.

Foregrounding questions about personhood reveals a different approach to theorising the subject of security amid an increasing emphasis on entanglement and assemblages in the new materialist and posthumanist literatures.¹⁴ Rafi Youatt, in this issue, for instance, generates insightful arguments about ‘interspecies assemblages as the units of analysis’.¹⁵ Over the past decade, Martin Coward and others have importantly shifted IR’s description of the citizen as an autonomous individual to ‘an assemblage composed of human and nonhuman materials’.¹⁶ As Burke argues in this issue, humans are undoubtedly constituted by, and embedded within, discourses and material-affective networks of human, non-human, and more-than-human agents.¹⁷ And it is certainly important to view actors as more (or other) than ‘subjects’ who are singular, cohesive ‘individual’ self-constituting agents.¹⁸ Indeed, humans are often described as relational ‘actants’ or ‘phenomena’.¹⁹ As Karen Barad argues, ‘phenomena – whether lizards, electrons, or humans – exist only as a result of, and as part of, the world’s ongoing intra-activity, its dynamic and contingent differentiation into specific relationalities. “We humans” don’t make it so, not by dint of our own will, and not on our own.’²⁰ With such insights into the material

¹¹Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, ‘Ma’iingan relationship plan 1837/1842 ceded territory’, p. 8.

¹²Jason D. Sanders, ‘Wolves, lone and pack: Ojibwe treaty rights and the Wisconsin wolf hunt’, *Wisconsin Law Review* (2013), pp. 1263–94.

¹³Declaration Of Marvin Defoe’, p. 6.

¹⁴Anthony Burke and Stefanie Fishel, ‘Power, world politics and thing-systems in the Anthropocene’, in Frank Biermann and Eva Löwbrand (eds), *Anthropocene Encounters: New Directions in Green Political Thinking* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 87–107.

¹⁵Rafi Youatt, ‘Interspecies politics and the global rat: Ecology, extermination, experiment’, *Review of International Studies*, this Special Issue (2022).

¹⁶Martin Coward, ‘Between us in the city: Materiality, subjectivity, and community in the era of global urbanization’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 30:3 (2012), p. 468. See also Erika Cudworth and Stephen Hobden, ‘Complexity, ecologism, and posthuman politics’, *Review of International Studies*, 39:3 (2013), pp. 643–64.

¹⁷Anthony Burke, ‘Interspecies cosmopolitanism: Nonhuman power and the grounds of world order in the Anthropocene’, *Review of International Studies*, this Special Issue (2022).

¹⁸Claire Rasmussen, *The Autonomous Animal: Self-Governance and the Modern Subject* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

¹⁹Kathleen Birrell and Daniel Matthews, ‘Re-storying laws for the Anthropocene: Rights, obligations and an ethics of encounter’, *Law and Critique*, 31:3 (2020), pp. 275–92.

²⁰Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 353.

and affective complexities of bodies, entanglements, and assemblages, we might ask whether personhood is a regressive step back towards a problematic Cartesian concept of the autonomous, rational, rights-bearing human subject. But as many scholars have demonstrated, personhood need not be limited to Cartesian versions of the self-constituting subject.²¹ Analysis configured around more-than-human subjects can attend to unique forms of agentic expression and conscious experiences as well as the subjection of more-than-human subjects through forms of global entanglements and multispecies networks of violence.²² Reflections on personhood can simultaneously direct us to the relational contexts, structural pressures, and political forces that constitute subjects as well as the affective, agentic, and conscious experience of these subjects and those interacting with them.

The introduction to the Special Issue proceeds as follows. It begins by considering the question of more-than-human animal personhood, offering a view of psychological personhood rooted in affective experiences and phenomenal consciousness. This section is followed by a discussion of more-than-human wartime experiences, the multispecies politics of containing pathogenic viruses, and the global factory farm. I then consider what we might call ‘spiritual personhood’ to understand the spiritual ideas associated with certain moral arguments about the personhood of more-than-human subjects such as wolves, trees, rivers, and mountains. Specifically, I consider Ojibwe perspectives on the security of wolves as a means of understanding more-than-human personhood and security in terms of tribal sovereignty, spirituality, and multispecies relationality. This exploration is aligned with recent suggestions about how attending to indigenous worldviews can be central to understanding possibilities of decolonisation²³ and interspecies justice.²⁴ Relatedly, I consider articulations of spiritual personhood as another step towards making more central indigenous perspectives on sovereignty and security,²⁵ and as a means for better addressing the intersection of spirituality, interspecies relations, and security.²⁶

Security beyond humans

Decades ago, IR scholars began analysing security in terms of the ‘referent object of security’, focusing on three levels of security referents – individuals, states, and the international system.²⁷ While the individual level was somewhat marginalised initially, a vibrant research agenda on ‘human security’ soon emerged to argue for a ‘shift from the state to the individual’ and suggested that security scholars focus on military and non-military threats to human security.²⁸ This agenda

²¹See also Nurit Bird-David, ‘“Animism” revisited: Personhood, environment, and relational epistemology’, *Current Anthropology*, 40:S1 (1999), pp. S67–S81; Youatt, ‘Personhood and the rights of nature’; Chris Fowler, ‘Relational personhood revisited’, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 26:3 (2016), pp. 397–412.

²²Matthew Leep, ‘Specters of minks: Postcapitalist elegies and multispecies solidarities’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, (2022), available at: {doi:10.1177/03058298221131360}.

²³Sheryl R. Lightfoot, ‘Decolonizing self-determination: Haudenosaunee passports and negotiated sovereignty’, *European Journal of International Relations*, 27:4 (2021), pp. 971–94; Sheryl Lightfoot, *Global Indigenous Politics: A Subtle Revolution* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016); Jarrad Reddekop, ‘Against ontological capture: Drawing lessons from Amazonian Kichwa relationality’, *Review of International Studies* (2021), pp. 1–18, available at: {doi:10.1017/S0260210521000486}.

²⁴Deckha, ‘Unsettling anthropocentric legal systems’. See also Fishel and Gebara and Pereira in this Special Issue. Joana Castro Pereira and Maria Fernanda Gebara, ‘Where the material and the symbolic intertwine: Making sense of the Amazon in the Anthropocene’, *Review of International Studies*, this Special Issue (2022); Stephanie Fishel, ‘The global tree: Forests and the possibility of a multispecies IR’, *Review of International Studies*, this Special Issue (2022).

²⁵Justin de Leon, ‘Lakota experiences of (in)security: Cosmology and ontological security’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 22:1 (2020), pp. 33–62.

²⁶Jonathan Fisher and Cherry Leonardi, ‘Insecurity and the invisible: The challenge of spiritual (in)security’, *Security Dialogue*, 52:5 (2021), pp. 383–400.

²⁷Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations* (Brighton, Sussex, UK: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983).

²⁸Gary King and Christopher J. L. Murray, ‘Rethinking human security’, *Political Science Quarterly*, 116:4 (2001–02), pp. 588–9. This shift in the focus of security emerged in a broader context of IR scholarship moving away from the state-

pressed IR scholars to become more cognisant of how individuals experienced security. It also took a much broader view of the kinds of threats to the security of persons, building on earlier work that criticised approaching security in ‘excessively narrow and excessively military terms’ and seeking to extend security threats to be inclusive of earthquakes, droughts, and epidemics.²⁹ While many had already acknowledged that ‘people represent, in one sense, the irreducible basic unit to which the concept of security can be applied’,³⁰ and while many IR scholars were certainly concerned with individuals, the human security literature proposed to locate the human experience at the very heart of security scholarship.³¹ For proponents, this new agenda represented a ‘dramatic step by making the referent object not the state, society, or community, but the individual’, a move that more robustly centred ‘the actual issues threatening people’s lives’.³² Focusing on the security of states was seen as inadequate in the context of individuals experiencing poverty and environmental harm that crossed borders.³³ By prioritising individuals, IR scholars hoped to engage more productively with the ‘individual experiences’ and the ‘people-centered aspect’ of security.³⁴ Yet we have also seen moves away from the individual within the environmental security literature, which has brought attention to more-than-human concerns by describing the ‘referent objects of security’ as ‘ecosystems themselves’.³⁵ For instance, environmental security arguments have prioritised ‘the rights and needs’ of vulnerable groups ‘through the attention to ecosystem resilience, rather than these groups constituting a referent object of climate security themselves’.³⁶ But the more recent experiential and sensory turns in IR continue to offer a view of thinking of global politics in terms of the lived experiences of security.³⁷ These latter approaches are interested in the *people* and the *experiences* of insecurity that animate so many of our real-world concerns about global security.

But who counts as a person? For much of its history, the focus of personhood in IR has centred on states, which is likely the result of Alexander Wendt’s views on state personhood. Despite providing a compelling case for state personhood, Wendt disappointedly (and explicitly) directed efforts away from a serious consideration of more-than-human personhood. There have been numerous challenges and refinements to Wendt’s arguments about personhood,³⁸ but the focus remains largely anchored to questions about states more than other kinds of persons in global politics. Steering towards other possibilities requires contending with Wendt’s original parameters.

centric ideas of neorealism. See Fen Osler Hampson, *Madness in the Multitude: Human Security and World Disorder* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001).

²⁹Richard H. Ullman, ‘Redefining security’, *International Security*, 8:1 (1983), p. 129.

³⁰Buzan, *People, States, and Fear*, p. 18.

³¹Buzan would later accuse the shift to human security of ‘reductionism’, noting that ‘while a moral case for making individuals the ultimate referent object can be constructed, the cost to be paid is loss of analytical purchase on collective actors both as the main agents of security provision and as possessors of a claim to survival in their own right’. Barry Buzan, ‘What is human security? A reductionist, idealistic notion that adds little analytical value’, *Security Dialogue*, 35:3 (2004), p. 370.

³²Peter H. Liotta and Taylor Owen, ‘Why human security’, *Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, 7 (2006), p. 39.

³³Lorraine Elliott, ‘Human security/environmental security’, *Contemporary Politics*, 21:1 (2015), pp. 11–24; Simon Dalby, *Security and Environmental Change* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2009).

³⁴King and Murray, ‘Rethinking human security’, p. 588.

³⁵Matt McDonald, ‘Climate change and security: Towards ecological security?’, *International Theory*, 10:2 (2018), pp. 153–80.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 169.

³⁷See, for example, Christine Sylvester, ‘War, sense, and security’, in Laura Sjoberg (ed.), *Gender and International Security: Feminist Perspectives* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), pp. 24–37; Thea Waldron and Erin Baines, ‘Gender and embodied war knowledge’, *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 11:2 (2019), pp. 393–405.

³⁸For a critique of Wendt’s biological personhood claims, see, for example, Robert Oprisko and Kristopher Kaliher, ‘The state as a person?: Anthropomorphic personification vs. concrete durational being’, *Journal of International and Global Studies*, 6:1 (2014), pp. 30–49. See also Ringmar’s critique of Wendt’s claims as Eurocentric. Erik Ringmar, ‘The international politics of recognition’, in Thomas Lindemann and Erik Ringmar (eds), *The International Politics of Recognition* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2010), pp. 3–23.

One of Wendt's key definitional moves involves distinguishing between the internal and external constitution of personhood. The former refers to the 'structures and processes within the body of a person', whereas the latter involves social recognition.³⁹ In furthering a case for state personhood, Wendt envisions three types of persons: psychological, legal, and moral. Legal and moral persons are understood as 'externally constituted' persons who become persons only by human social recognition practices. By contrast, psychological personhood, while involving both internal and external processes, is primarily internally constituted and therefore not fully dependent on social recognition. In Wendt's account, psychological personhood is a privileged form, equated with what is described as 'natural' personhood.

According to Wendt, more-than-human animals can never be natural persons because they are understood to lack certain capacities such as intentionality, rationality, and consciousness that are seen as necessary for personhood. Wendt unambiguously argues that states and humans possess these capacities while more-than-human animals do not, writing that the 'internal biological and cognitive structure' of 'healthy adult human beings' means that humans possess 'the ability to be persons. Cats and dogs do not.'⁴⁰ The societal recognition of more-than-human animals as persons is acknowledged, yet this recognition is positioned as having little to do with the internal constitution of personhood. While animal rights lawyers might consider more-than-human animals to be persons, according to Wendt, more-than-human animals 'cannot understand or appropriate that personhood themselves'.⁴¹ This position is forcefully argued but hazy on the human/non-human distinction regarding biological and cognitive capacities, sidestepping decades of studies on non-human animal cognition. For instance, Wendt claims that 'animals are not capable' of what he refers to as 'intelligent rational action', which is 'one reason they should not be so recognized [as persons]'.⁴² Yet dismissing more-than-human intelligent rational action ignores a long history of philosophical and scientific studies on the cognitive complexities of more-than-human animals. Even some of the most historically despised more-than-human animals reveal a level of intelligence that challenges Wendt's claims. Rats possess the ability to acquire and reason with causal knowledge, generating observations about the world and making rational interventions based on these observations.⁴³ As Youatt argues in this Special Issue, even while many assume 'the lives of rats to be essentially disposable, we nonetheless test and experiment widely on laboratory rats precisely because we think that both their bodies and intelligence resemble ours in some important ways'.⁴⁴ Moreover, these claims present as a kind of power over the more-than-human subject, positioning Wendt as an 'obvious' person with the power to decide the personhood of others. As Jacques Derrida puts it, this kind of move is representative of an anthropocentric view of 'power over the animal' as central to 'the essence of the "I" or the "person"'.⁴⁵

To take another subject of this Special Issue – birds – scientists have studied their intelligence and transitive reasoning skills, discovering how birds make sophisticated judgements about unknown relationships based on indirect evidence.⁴⁶ These judgements include making inferences about one's social status in social settings. Pinyon jays, for example, generate intelligent

³⁹Wendt, 'The state as person in international theory', p. 293.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 293.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 293. This view also privileges psychological personhood over legal and moral personhood. Jorg Kustermans, 'The state as citizen: State personhood and ideology', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 14:1 (2011), p. 5.

⁴²Wendt, 'The state as person in international theory', p. 293.

⁴³Aaron P. Blaisdell et al., 'Causal reasoning in rats', *Science*, 311:5763 (2006), pp. 1020–22.

⁴⁴Youatt, 'Interspecies politics and the global rat', p. 2.

⁴⁵Jacques Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, trans. David Wills (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2008), p. 93.

⁴⁶Olga F. Lazareva and Edward A. Wasserman, 'Effect of stimulus orderability and reinforcement history on transitive responding in pigeons', *Behavioural Processes*, 72:2 (2006), pp. 161–72; Brigitte M. Weiß, Sophia Kehmeier, and Christian Schloegl, 'Transitive inference in free-living greylag geese, *Anser anser*', *Animal Behaviour*, 79:6 (2010), pp. 1277–83.

inferences about their social status by observing jay strangers interacting with jays whom they know.⁴⁷ If, as Leep argues in this issue, ‘birds are decision-makers, have their own kinds of language, and exhibit self-awareness in relation to time and space’, then we might study them as ‘actors who exhibit forms of avian agency in international relations’.⁴⁸ Taking these forms of intelligence and agency more seriously is not simply an exercise in appreciating other lives in the abstract; rather, it serves as a call for assessing the multispecies encounters in which human and more-than-human individuals experience security in politically meaningful terms. For instance, debates about testing weapons for the Iraq War – processes that often harm birds – can be approached ‘through the lens of birds that have their own perspectives on space, time, and risk’.⁴⁹ Viewing rats and birds as intelligent rational actors demands ‘more imaginative approaches to the political and ecological issues’.⁵⁰ If intelligent, rational action is a critical aspect of personhood, then it appears rather misguided to limit our consideration of personhood to humans and states.

We might understand intentionality in similar terms. Wendt acknowledges that ‘it is not obvious how to distinguish human from animal intentionality’ but adopts a view of intentionality that means ‘human or “intelligent” intentionality, whatever that precisely is’.⁵¹ A key distinction is left unresolved yet employed to deny the psychological personhood of more-than-human animals. Decades of cognition research demonstrate forms of more-than-human intentionality.⁵² Given this evidence, philosophers such as John Searle have viewed more-than-human animals as intentional beings. For Searle, ‘any argument against animal intentionality and thinking has to imply the following piece of speculative neurobiology: the difference between human and animal brains is such that the human brain can cause and sustain intentionality and thinking, and animal brains cannot’.⁵³ Such speculative arguments, Searle writes, are ‘breathtakingly irresponsible’.⁵⁴ Given the ‘neurobiological continuity’ between many human and non-human forms of life, and considering the large body of evidence about ‘intentional actions’ such as ‘playing, fighting, reproducing, raising their young, and trying to stay alive’, confining intentionality to humans is a dubious effort.⁵⁵ As Geoffrey Whitehall reveals in this Special Issue, we can also extend our understanding of political resistance to be inclusive of more-than-human actors.⁵⁶ Anthony Burke similarly argues for modifying ‘our theories and practice of political and international power’ to accommodate non-human life.⁵⁷ In short, observations and arguments by philosophers and scientists have importantly clouded the clarity of certain boundaries between human and more-than-human animal intentionality. Certain differences can be identified, but attention to the complexities (and variations) of human and more-than-human intentionality should caution us against wielding any potential differences to define personhood exclusively in human terms.

There are also cultural and circular logic problems with wielding supposed or unclear differences between human and more-than-human animal intentionality to make claims about personhood. Selecting certain cognitive and psychological capacities as features of personhood and then defining personhood in terms of these capacities is a circular way to conceptualise personhood. In other words, an argument about defining personhood is often ‘already an answer to its own

⁴⁷Guillermo Paz-y-Miño et al., ‘Pinyon jays use transitive inference to predict social dominance’, *Nature*, 430:7001 (2004), pp. 778–81.

⁴⁸Leep, ‘Toxic entanglements’, p. 18.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁵⁰Youatt, ‘Interspecies politics and the global rat’, p. 16.

⁵¹Wendt, ‘The state as person in international theory’, p. 293.

⁵²Laura Danón, ‘Neo-pragmatism, primitive intentionality and animal minds’, *Philosophia*, 47:1 (2019), pp. 39–58.

⁵³John Searle, ‘Animal minds’, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, XIX (1994), p. 208.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁵⁶Geoffrey Whitehall, ‘When they fight back: A cinematic archive of animal resistance and world wars’, *Review of International Studies*, this Special Issue (2022).

⁵⁷Burke, ‘Interspecies cosmopolitanism’.

questions about who is and is not a person'.⁵⁸ Wendt's arguments hinge on a certain kind of intentionality that is deemed to be an essential feature of a larger concept – personhood – and those supposedly lacking such features are ruled out as persons. Under such a test, more-than-human animals can never be persons, not because they are *not* persons, but because they are excluded by a circular definition that precludes their personhood. This style of argument rests on circular claims about (often undefined) human intentionality defining personhood and personhood status being conferred on those with such a trait. Personhood, therefore, becomes conditional on certain pre-selected capacities and traits, yet the choice of *which* capacities/traits and *how* to define them is far from straightforward. These choices can also be deeply rooted in philosophical norms of dualism – the 'worst mistake that we inherited from Cartesianism'⁵⁹ – as well as cultural assumptions about personhood.⁶⁰ If personhood depends on a narrow and often culturally specific understanding of traits like intentionality, then the definition and inclusion of this feature require either a more rigorous set of claims or at least an acknowledgment of its contestable assumptions. Wendt's binary person/non-person and arguments about 'person by social convention' versus 'person by nature' rest on an assumption that there is some identifiable 'natural' personhood that is rooted in a kind of human intelligence or intentionality that can neatly split the world into persons and non-persons. The 'internal' versus 'external' personhood so central to Wendt's typology and view on intelligence ignores that personhood is *always* externally posited by humans with different cultural backgrounds and who continually disagree on its precise contours. Views on intelligent rational action, intentionality, and personhood are inescapably contestable and coloured by cultural norms.

There are alternatives to beginning with a view of certain actors as persons and working backward to justify them as persons to the exclusion of others. We might instead think of personhood as a contestable means of understanding subjects and their experiences rather than a fully formed naturalistic concept free of cultural assumptions. In this view, personhood becomes a conceptual avenue for reflection on more-than-human political experiences and multispecies security. To consider how more-than-human subjects experience war as persons, for example, is not to make definitive claims about personhood but to think more reflectively about how different more-than-human beings experience the world, violence, and power as individuals. Debates about personhood are often arguments about how 'we' should view others – their cognitive and emotional states, intentions, and, ultimately, what kind of respect, dignity, and obligations are owed to these others.⁶¹ The view advanced here hopefully offers a more open and inclusive means of conceptualising, scrutinising, and clarifying how subjects – human and more-than-human – experience the politics of security.

Consciousness, personhood, and global security

Consciousness is often understood as inseparable from personhood.⁶² For Wendt, it is a core feature of personhood and defined in phenomenal terms as 'a capacity for first-person, subjective experience'.⁶³ While typically discussed in terms of *state* consciousness, we can also consider *more-than-human* animal consciousness to expand our view of psychological personhood.

⁵⁸Youatt, 'Personhood and the rights of nature', p. 44. See also Elisa Aaltola, 'Personhood and animals'.

⁵⁹Searle, 'Animal minds', p. 217.

⁶⁰Fernando Santos-Granero, 'Beinghood and people-making in native Amazonia: A constructional approach with a perspectival coda', *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 2:1 (2012), pp. 181–211. See also Pereira and Gebara, 'Where the material and the symbolic intertwine'.

⁶¹Jacob Schiff, "'Real"? As if! Critical reflections on state personhood', *Review of International Studies*, 34:2 (2008), pp. 363–77.

⁶²Adam B. Lerner, 'What's it like to be a state? An argument for state consciousness', *International Theory*, 13:2 (2021), pp. 260–86.

⁶³Wendt, 'The state as person in international theory', p. 296.

Here we will consider the subjective character of conscious experience, which involves the point of view of human *and* more-than-human subjects. These points of view not only involve human cognitive assessments of the world; they are inclusive of more-than-human sensory and affective aspects of experience. Thomas Nagel's classic work on phenomenal consciousness interestingly considers the experience of consciousness in bats, arguing that

conscious experience is a widespread phenomenon. It occurs at many levels of animal life ... No doubt it occurs in countless forms totally unimaginable to us ... But no matter how the form may vary, the fact that an organism has conscious experience *at all* means, basically, that there is something it is like to *be* that organism.⁶⁴

Phenomenal consciousness involves human *and* more-than-human sensory experiences of the world.

Those following in Nagel's path are more interested in the 'hard problem' of consciousness – the subjective experiential aspect of consciousness – rather than, for example, the neural correlates of consciousness.⁶⁵ This subjective aspect of consciousness refers to bodily sensations and mental images that involve a 'felt quality of emotion' and 'states of experience', which constitute what it is like to be in the world.⁶⁶ For example, David Chalmers writes that 'an organism is conscious if there is something it is like to be that organism, and a mental state is conscious if there is something it is like to be in that state.'⁶⁷ Phenomenal consciousness is one term used to capture this idea of consciousness.⁶⁸ Because defining phenomenal consciousness is a fraught endeavour involving human limits, we are reminded to avoid 'equating it by definitional fiat with some behavioral or cognitive pattern'.⁶⁹ A more capacious approach involves drawing on examples of phenomenal consciousness rather than demarcating its boundaries by defining it in terms of certain component concepts and neural features or reducing it to functional mechanisms. Eric Schwitzgebel, for instance, refers to sensory and emotional experiences to define phenomenal consciousness,⁷⁰ finding many more-than-human animals to be phenomenally conscious.⁷¹

There are undoubtedly epistemic and discursive problems of knowing and expressing the experience of consciousness across species lines; thus, epistemic humility is an important feature of writing about phenomenal consciousness. When Nagel writes that 'there are facts that do not consist in the truth of propositions expressible in a human language', he is not only reflecting on the experientiality of more-than-human others but also writing in a manner reflective of the gaps or thresholds between seeking to understand and describing what may never be fully understandable and articulable.⁷² Importantly, there is an epistemic mysteriousness to phenomenal consciousness in the sense that subjective experiences appear in 'countless forms' that are 'totally unimaginable to us'.⁷³ Experience can be measured and operationalised in certain ways, but such moves do not – and cannot – exhaust the range of possibilities of what it is, how it manifests, and for whom it emerges. The 'to us' in Nagel's argument is therefore significant. Human limits –

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 436.

⁶⁵David J. Chalmers, 'Facing up to the problem of consciousness', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 2:3 (1995), pp. 200–19. For an overview of recent approaches to the study of the neural correlates of consciousness, see Christof Koch et al., 'Neural correlates of consciousness: Progress and problems', *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 17:5 (2016), pp. 307–21.

⁶⁶Chalmers, 'Facing up to the problem of consciousness', p. 201.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 201.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 201.

⁶⁹Eric Schwitzgebel, *Perplexities of Consciousness* (Boston, MA: MIT Press, 2011), p. 113.

⁷⁰Eric Schwitzgebel, 'Phenomenal consciousness, defined and defended as innocently as I can manage', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 23:11–12 (2016), pp. 224–35.

⁷¹Eric Schwitzgebel, 'Is there something it's like to be a garden snail?', *Philosophical Topics*, 48:1 (2020), pp. 39–64. See also Jonathan Birch, 'The search for invertebrate consciousness', *Noûs*, 56:1 (2022), pp. 133–53.

⁷²Nagel, 'What is it like to be a bat?', p. 441.

⁷³Ibid., p. 436.

both imaginative and scientific – inevitably curtail how we conceive and articulate the meaning, and analyse the expression of, phenomenal consciousness. In considering the sensory sonar experience of bats, for example, Nagel posits that ‘there is no reason to suppose that it is subjectively like anything we can experience or imagine.’⁷⁴ Notwithstanding scientific progress, humans ‘cannot form more than a schematic conception of what it *is* like’ to be a bat.⁷⁵ Yet there exists the possibility to ‘transcend inter-species barriers with the aid of the imagination’.⁷⁶ In IR, imaginative work on the interspecies experience of war⁷⁷ and COVID-19 has been conducted in poetic terms.⁷⁸ But as much as we stretch our imagination, the view of the other’s experience will always be partial. As Nagel puts it, ‘even to form a *conception* of what it is like to be a bat (and a fortiori to know what it is like to be a bat) one must take up the bat’s point of view. If one can take it up roughly, or partially, then one’s conception will also be rough or partial.’⁷⁹ Given these limits, a key point is that exploring phenomenal consciousness should be an epistemically open pursuit, inclusive of imaginative modes of writing and epistemic difficulty.⁸⁰ Epistemic humility and imaginative modes of writing are therefore techniques of making meaning out of the mysteriousness of consciousness that extends across species lines.

This approach to consciousness has important implications for questions about the subjects and subjective experience of security. It matters for thinking about which kinds of security experiences are understood as worthy of consideration. If phenomenal consciousness is central to what it means to be a person, and if many more-than-human animals are phenomenally conscious, then arguments about personhood must address persons beyond states and humans. Doing so expands our view of whose experiences of violence, power, and security-seeking behaviour are worthy of exploration. And as Adam Lerner writes about state personhood, there are normative implications for personhood debates, given that they raise questions about moral standing and the ethics of violence.⁸¹ To think in terms of *persons* is to attend to the more-than-human affective and experiential complexity of security more explicitly.

Consider the security experience of dogs. As discussed earlier, Wendt denies that dogs are persons, overlooking their conscious experience of the world. More recently, while Lerner notes that ‘one has no way of knowing if a dog is simply a deceptive zombie seeking the benefits of human presumptions of phenomenological consciousness’, he ultimately seems to agree that it is reasonable to think of dogs as phenomenally conscious.⁸² But to even raise the question of a dog as a ‘deceptive zombie’ in the first place seems to be indicative of a certain strain or style of argument that scholars like Schwitzgebel find vexing. As he notes, ‘we are more confident that there is something it is like to be a dog than we could ever be that a clever philosophical argument to the contrary was in fact sound.’⁸³ So if dogs are phenomenally conscious beings, we should consider their personhood. The more central question is how to move beyond abstract reflections on dogs as phenomenally conscious beings to more concrete considerations of them as persons with security experiences. This shift is no trite matter, as the issue of dogs experiencing security is not abstract. Indeed, dogs are involved in warfare in a variety of ways.⁸⁴ Amid the recent Russian

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 438.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 439.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 442.

⁷⁷Matthew Leep, *Cosmopolitan Belongingness and War: Animals, Loss, and Spectral-Poetic Moments* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2021).

⁷⁸Leep, ‘Specters of minks’.

⁷⁹Thomas Nagel, ‘What is it like to be a bat?’, p. 442.

⁸⁰Schwitzgebel, ‘Phenomenal consciousness, defined and defended as innocently as I can manage’.

⁸¹Lerner, ‘What’s it like to be a state?’. But as I claim throughout, the language of personhood is not about determining the moral status of others; rather, it is an effort to attend more fully to interspecies experiences and more-than-human security perspectives.

⁸²Ibid., p. 269.

⁸³Schwitzgebel, ‘Is there something it’s like to be a garden snail?’, p. 54.

⁸⁴Erika Cudworth and Steve Hobden, ‘The posthuman way of war’, *Security Dialogue*, 46:6 (2015), pp. 513–29.

invasion of Ukraine, hundreds of dogs near Kyiv died after weeks without food and water.⁸⁵ Leep's research on posthumanist global responsibilities and street dogs experiencing wartime violence is an example of the complications of multispecies security.⁸⁶ Ben Meiches's work on dogs performing mine detection labour for militaries is another example of dogs experiencing war in complicated ways.⁸⁷ If dogs are phenomenally conscious persons, then it becomes essential to more fully account for their experiences of security, however unexpected or uncertain.

Consider just one moment of a street dog observing a soldier shooting a rifle during war. To put this in Nagel's terms, there is 'something it is like' for the dog to witness this. The dog encounters the sounds of the rifle, the sight of the soldier shooting, and has some point of view on this experience. This point of view is part of a conscious experience that can be said to be a constitutive feature of the dog's personhood. The visual and aural experiences are part of the 'what' it's like for the dog to be in this wartime context, experiences that would likely involve anxiety or fear. The phenomenally conscious experience is an experience *for* the dog. The dog is not only reacting to environmental stimuli like a machine but having a sensory and cognitive experience that includes a subjective point of view. The dog's personhood cannot be reduced to this simple experience, but it is constitutive of what it means to be a dog person. The dog is not simply a zombie-like animal. They are a conscious person experiencing war, even if there is no psychological observation or self-report to define or explain the experience. There are, however, literatures on dog cognition and emotion that demonstrate how conscious experiences are part of what it means to be a dog.⁸⁸ Indeed, we know quite a bit about dog cognition in interspecies contexts. Dogs process and understand human gestural communication and the intentions of humans.⁸⁹ Not only do dogs have intentions (a typical component of persons, as described earlier), but they also understand and engage with the intentions of others. Similarly, dogs can learn the emotional expression of humans and make decisions in response to these learned emotions.⁹⁰ In terms of psychological personhood, dogs are effective processors of spatial and kinaesthetic information and make complex cognitive calculations in order to map their environments.⁹¹ Beyond the external constitution of dog personhood, which is culturally variable,⁹² dogs can be seen as persons in terms of having subjective emotional lives and experiences, which include experiences of jealousy⁹³ and cross-species empathy.⁹⁴ We might therefore conceive of dogs as not merely highly intelligent, rational decision-makers but as persons who experience the world with profound emotions.⁹⁵ We might only tap the surface of these experiences, but doing so fosters more creative and politically efficacious ways of understanding the experience of global security. Towards this end, the purpose of thinking about security through more-than-human personhood is not simply to convert security experiences into theoretical

⁸⁵Vanessa Romo, 'More than 300 dogs die of hunger and thirst in a Ukraine shelter', *NPR* (6 April 2022), available at: <https://www.npr.org/2022/04/06/1091159646/more-than-300-dogs-starved-to-death-at-a-shelter-in-ukraine>.

⁸⁶Matthew Leep, 'Stray dogs, post-humanism and cosmopolitan belongingness: Interspecies hospitality in times of war', *Millennium*, 47:1 (2018), pp. 45–66.

⁸⁷Benjamin Meiches, 'Non-human humanitarians', *Review of International Studies*, 45:1 (2019), pp. 1–19.

⁸⁸Oliver H. Turnbull and Annalena Bär, 'Animal minds: The case for emotion, based on neuroscience', *Neuropsychanalysis*, 22:1–2 (2020), pp. 109–28.

⁸⁹Juliane Kaminski, Linda Schulz, and Michael Tomasello, 'How dogs know when communication is intended for them', *Developmental Science*, 15:2 (2012), pp. 222–32.

⁹⁰Isabella Merola, Emanuela Prato-Previde, and Sarah Marshall-Pescini, 'Dogs' social referencing towards owners and strangers', *PLoS ONE*, 7:10 (2012), p. e47653.

⁹¹Ádám Miklósi, *Dog Behavior, Evolution, and Cognition* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁹²Jaime Chambers et al., 'Dog-human coevolution: Cross-cultural analysis of multiple hypotheses', *Journal of Ethnobiology*, 40:4 (2020), pp. 414–33.

⁹³Christine R. Harris and Caroline Prouvost, 'Jealousy in dogs', *PLoS One*, 9:7 (2014), p. e94597.

⁹⁴Min Hooi Yong, and Ted Ruffman, 'Emotional contagion: Dogs and humans show a similar physiological response to human infant crying', *Behavioural Processes*, 108 (2014), pp. 155–65.

⁹⁵Miiamaaria V. Kujala, 'Canine emotions as seen through human social cognition', *Animal Sentience*, 14:1 (2017), pp. 1–34.

claims but to open possibilities of ethical understanding, reinvigorate empirical analysis beyond the human, and reframe how we see the experience of security.

Multispecies security and pathogenic viruses

The previous section viewed global security politics in terms of more-than-human personhood, consciousness, and experientiality. While it importantly foregrounded the individuality of life, the Special Issue also conceptualises individual experiences as embedded in larger ecological, economic, and political processes that unfold over space and time. Joana Castro Pereira and Maria Fernanda Gebara, along with Stephanie Fishel explore indigenous perspectives on and multispecies effects of large-scale deforestation practices.⁹⁶ Burke views anthropogenic climate change as a security issue that presses IR scholars to consider more-than-human vulnerability and autonomy.⁹⁷ Gitte du Plessis examines the plastic materiality and racialised geopolitics of childhood malnutrition regarding the ‘destruction of life-sustaining multi-species organs’.⁹⁸ I describe the effects of experiments and wartime weapons testing practices on birds, while Youatt examines the contested politics of widespread more-than-human animal experiments. These are ‘critical sites of contemporary global politics’ yet are not traditionally viewed as security issues.⁹⁹ Attending to these processes – climate change, deforestation, war practices, and more-than-human animal experiments – enables perspectives on more-than-human experiences of security in terms of larger planetary, economic, and sociopolitical conditions. This section expands on these contributions by looking at the global security nexus of agroc capitalist processes and pathogenic viruses. As many researchers have recently alluded to, agroc capitalist processes (also referred to as ‘intensive animal agriculture’ processes) that convert more-than-human life into consumable products increase the possibilities of trans-species transmission of pathogenic viruses across borders.¹⁰⁰ These processes are therefore an important systemic issue of relevance to scholars interested in global security. Considering the more-than-human experience of two pathogenic viruses – Nipah (NiV) and SARS-CoV-2 – this section illustrates the tangled security of human and more-than-human persons in the context of agroc capitalist or ‘factory farm’ practices – practices often neglected by IR scholars.¹⁰¹

Nipah (NiV) is a zoonotic virus that made its first appearance in Malaysia in the late 1990s and soon spread to nearby countries. A bat-borne virus with a mortality rate between 40 and 70 per cent, it causes brain inflammation and can quickly lead to comatose states.¹⁰² Due to its contagiousness and potential for a global outbreak, NiV is considered one of the ‘epidemic threats needing urgent R&D [research and development] action’ by the World Health Organization.¹⁰³ While its deadly effects on humans have been well documented, NiV also presents a security threat to more-than-human animals. Pigs, for example, suffer immensely from the virus. The agroc capitalist conditions of pigs in intensive meat factories in Malaysia, one of Southeast Asia’s largest pig meat producers, was a primary reason why NiV became a human and more-than-human security threat.

⁹⁶Pereira and Gebara, ‘Where the material and the symbolic intertwine’; Fishel, ‘The global tree’.

⁹⁷Burke, ‘Interspecies cosmopolitanism’.

⁹⁸Gitte du Plessis, ‘Destructive plasticity and the microbial geopolitics of childhood malnutrition’, *Review of International Studies*, this Special Issue (2022), p. 11.

⁹⁹Leep, ‘Toxic entanglements’; Youatt, ‘Interspecies politics and the global rat’, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰Bernstein and Jan Dutkiewicz, ‘A public health ethics case for mitigating zoonotic disease risk in food production’, *Food Ethics*, 6:2 (2021), pp. 1–25.

¹⁰¹Matthew Leep, ‘Cosmopolitanism in a carnivorous world’, *Politics and Animals*, 3:1 (2017), pp. 16–30.

¹⁰²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ‘Nipah Virus (NiV)’, available at: {<https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/nipah/index.html>}.

¹⁰³World Health Organization, ‘R&D Blueprint and Nipah’ (10 January 2019), available at: {<https://www.who.int/teams/blueprint/nipah>}.

The most sophisticated analysis of the NiV outbreak points to the role of intensive animal agricultural systems (i.e., ‘factory farms’) involving pigs.¹⁰⁴ Fruit bats (also known as flying foxes) were the source of the virus. But it was factory-farmed pigs, infected by bats, who infected humans. Once NiV made its way into the pig farm, these farms became an ‘infection source outside the flying fox reservoir’.¹⁰⁵ These agroc capitalist conditions were therefore a key and intermediate reason why the virus ‘jumped’ to humans. The spread of NiV was so rapid because confined pigs were clustered together in tight spaces. Moving from traditional small farms to large, concentrated pig farms meant that ‘when a virus got into the pigs, it could multiply very quickly.’¹⁰⁶ For this reason, a ‘pig factory’ in peninsular Malaysia became a ‘virus factory’.¹⁰⁷ From Malaysia, the virus crossed borders as infected pigs were sold and shipped to other countries.

We often think of the human effects of pathogenic viruses to the exclusion of how more-than-human dimensions impact virus and health security decisions. In the case of factory farm conditions related to pathogenic virus transmissions across borders, we often consider more-than-human animals as *sources* or *reservoirs* of viruses. It is with less frequency that we articulate the specificity of more-than-human experiences of viruses, even though the effects of viruses and the security decisions made in response to them are experienced in complex, multi-species ways.

Consider the pig experience of NiV. A central feature was the experience of becoming a security threat and being subjected to a mass killing (cull). Because pigs could transmit the bat-borne virus to humans, government decisions were made to cull them.¹⁰⁸ In early 1999, when it was still unclear that NiV was the virus harming pigs and humans, the Malaysian government began a mass culling operation, with soldiers shooting and killing over 130,000 pigs.¹⁰⁹ Over a million pigs were ‘shoved into pits and shot’ in and around the Malaysian village of Kampung Sungai Nipah – the place for which the virus was named.¹¹⁰ The entire town ‘smelled like death’, according to one farmer.¹¹¹ Because shooting the pigs arguably took too long, the Malaysian government ultimately decided to electrocute them as a more efficient means of killing.¹¹² While NiV causes fatal respiratory and neurological diseases in humans and pigs alike, only the latter were subjected to culling. Thus, while many security concerns with NiV focused on the human experience, a perspective centring more-than-human personhood can alert us to the security experience of more-than-human lives like pigs – the ‘intermediate host’ of NiV.

While the pigs were viewed as killable security threats, this killability is related to how pigs were already seen not as persons but as commodifiable bodies and consumable products.¹¹³ A view of pigs as persons, however, presses us to pay attention to their lives in other terms. Pigs are highly intelligent beings¹¹⁴ who exhibit self-consciousness¹¹⁵ and complex forms of

¹⁰⁴Juliet R.C. Pulliam et al., ‘Agricultural intensification, priming for persistence and the emergence of Nipah virus: A lethal bat-borne zoonosis’, *Journal of the Royal Society Interface*, 9:66 (2012), pp. 89–101.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Michaeleen Doucleff and Jane Greenhalgh, ‘A taste for pork helped a deadly virus jump to humans’, *NPR* (25 February 2017), available at: {<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/02/25/515258818/a-taste-for-pork-helped-a-deadly-virus-jump-to-humans>}.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸K. B. Chua et al., ‘Nipah virus: A recently emergent deadly paramyxovirus’, *Science*, 288:5470 (2000), pp. 1432–5.

¹⁰⁹Frances Harrison, ‘Malaysia kills pigs as virus jumps to humans’, *The Guardian* (29 March 1999), available at: {<https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/mar/30/malaysia>}.

¹¹⁰Doucleff and Greenhalgh, ‘A taste for pork helped a deadly virus jump to humans’.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Harrison, ‘Malaysia kills pigs as virus jumps to humans’.

¹¹³For a similar argument about minks, mink farms, and pathogenic viruses, see Leep, ‘Specters of minks’.

¹¹⁴Donald M. Broom, Hilana Sena, and Kiera L. Moynihan, ‘Pigs learn what a mirror image represents and use it to obtain information’, *Animal Behaviour*, 78:5 (2009), pp. 1037–41.

¹¹⁵David Judd and James Rocha, ‘Autonomous pigs’, *Ethics and the Environment*, 22:1 (2017), pp. 1–18.

intentionality – a key aspect of personhood for most scholars.¹¹⁶ Like humans, they engage in playful behaviour.¹¹⁷ While not a typical element of personhood, playfulness illustrates an important cognitive and emotional-social activity that is often characteristic of other kinds of persons. Pigs also view other pigs in terms of individuality, understanding and recognising the distinctive voices of other pigs.¹¹⁸ Pigs, therefore, experience the world in ways that align with our previous discussion of phenomenal consciousness. Viewing pigs as persons offers a different vantage for understanding the multispecies politics and security experience of pathogenic viruses. The conceptual language of personhood is a means of reflecting on what it is like to be a pig in the world. This perspective does not downplay the risks of virus transmission; rather, it provides a framework to inquire into, and account for, the more-than-human experience of becoming a pathogenic security threat. IR scholars might therefore offer not only more robust explorations of the global factory farm and its connection to more-than-human pathogenic concerns but also examine more-than-human experiential perspectives on viruses and the politics of virus containment.

This viewpoint is also relevant to more recent concerns with coronaviruses. Consider the SARS-CoV-1 outbreak in southern China in 2002–04. Nearly two decades before the recent SARS-CoV-2 outbreak, bats were the source of a coronavirus outbreak. As bats with coronaviruses were ‘found in markets in southern China’, scientists speculated that bats infected a middle ‘amplifying species’ in a live animal market, which created a spillover effect and infections in humans. While bats were the reservoir host, live animal markets in southern China were the likely proximate source of this outbreak. Scientists identified raccoon dogs as the probable ‘intermediate host’ of the virus.¹¹⁹ This outbreak resulted in many culls, including exterminative projects to eliminate civets and raccoon dogs suspected of harboring the pathogenic virus. Civets were reportedly intentionally drowned.¹²⁰ Raccoon dogs and hog badgers in markets were also targeted for extermination.¹²¹ Reports described the extermination efforts but not the experience of being exterminated, of becoming a killable security threat. A personhood perspective might not only alert us to assess how the commercialisation of more-than-human life in markets is a security issue but might press us to consider the experience of civets, raccoon dogs, and hog badgers. We know little of their lives and experience of becoming security threats. Beyond their pain of captivity in fur farms,¹²² raccoon dogs, for example, are known for their flexible ecological abilities, living in sparse mountain forests as well as suburban and urban areas. Like humans, their food preferences are adaptable and can vary by season. For instance, raccoon dogs around Tokyo prefer ginkgo and persimmon fruits found in gardens and parks during autumn.¹²³ Conceptualising raccoon dogs as persons who experience the world as conscious beings, rather than commodities or killable virus carriers, is one step towards thinking in more robust normative and agentic terms about the more-than-human experience of global security.

At the time of this writing, substantial evidence points to a similar origin story for the zoonotic emergence of SARS-CoV-2.¹²⁴ There is an ongoing scientific endeavour to determine the origins

¹¹⁶Michael Mendl, Suzanne Held, and Richard W. Byrne, ‘Pig cognition’, *Current and the Environment*, 22:1 (2017), pp. 1–18.

¹¹⁷Kristina Horback, ‘Nosing around: Play in pigs’, *Animal Behavior and Cognition*, 1:2 (2014), pp. 186–96.

¹¹⁸Adriana S. Souza et al., ‘A novel method for testing social recognition in young pigs and the modulating effects of relocation’, *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 99:1–2 (2006), pp. 77–87.

¹¹⁹Yi Guan et al., ‘Isolation and characterization of viruses related to the SARS coronavirus from animals in southern China’, *Science*, 302:5643 (2003), pp. 276–78.

¹²⁰Jim Yardley, ‘The SARS scare in China: Slaughter of the animals’, *New York Times* (7 January 2004), p. A3.

¹²¹Yardley, ‘The SARS scare in China’, p. A3.

¹²²Humane Society International, ‘Fur Farm Investigation’ (15 March 2021), available at: <https://www.hsi.org/news-media/fur-farm-investigation-reveals-distressed-foxes-raccoon-dogs-electrocuted-in-agony-and-fur-farm-carcasses-sold-for-human-consumption/>.

¹²³Mizuho Hirasawa, Eiji Kanda, and Seiki Takatsuki, ‘Seasonal food habits of the raccoon dog at a western suburb of Tokyo’, *Mammal Study*, 31:1 (2006), pp. 9–14.

¹²⁴Michael Worobey et al., ‘The Huanan Market was the Epicenter of SARS-CoV-2 Emergence’ (2022), available at: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6299600>.

of SARS-CoV-2. Like the previous SARS outbreak, research suggests that the reservoir hosts of SARS-CoV-2 were bats. Compelling evidence suggests that the insectivorous bats living in the limestone caves of South China, Vietnam, and Laos were the source of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.¹²⁵ It also appears that more-than-human animals infected by these bats and sold in a live animal market served as the ‘intermediate hosts’ that infected humans, creating a global pandemic. The most systematic and comprehensive account of the origins of COVID-19 demonstrates that live mammals sold at the Huanan market in Wuhan were the intermediate hosts,¹²⁶ including raccoon dogs, which, as previously mentioned, were linked to the earlier coronavirus outbreak as they are prone to SARS-CoV-2 infections and can transmit the virus to other animals.¹²⁷ Other more-than-human animals sold alive in the Huanan market that might have played a role in the spillover effect include hog badgers, Chinese bamboo rats, red foxes, Malayan porcupines, Asian badgers, Chinese muntjac, Chinese hares, and marmots.¹²⁸ Elsewhere in Europe, governments culled minks in factory farms after discovering that SARS-CoV-2 infected many of them.

Relatedly, viewing more-than-human animals as phenomenally conscious persons might foster greater sensitivity to the ethics of security-seeking behaviour. For example, if minks are phenomenally conscious persons, then how should we perceive attempts to achieve security through the mass killing of minks who have contracted COVID-19? What norms should govern if and how more-than-human animals should be killed to achieve security? Pursuing these questions requires first considering mass killing events like culls an appropriate question of security. The perspective outlined here suggests that these questions require a multispecies form of analysis attentive to more-than-human viewpoints and experiences. Questions about the security of more-than-human life are *always* shaped by views on personhood – usually implicit views of more-than-human others as *not* persons. In this way, conceptualising more-than-human animals as phenomenally conscious persons shifts the consideration of killing into the specific terrain of experiential complexity. Drawing on Donna Haraway, Rafi Youatt raises questions about killability and ‘killing in a responsible way’, asking, for example, ‘What reasons can we find? Which individual animals should we kill? When can we be killed or die?’¹²⁹ Youatt does not provide answers to these challenging questions, noting that these are ‘open questions’ that are ‘generated in intraspecies interaction rather than in management strategies’.¹³⁰ But these kinds of questions are certainly concrete ones faced and answered by governments during times of war and pandemics. I suggest that phenomenally conscious personhood can inform or shed different light on the abstractions of killability and ambiguities of theorising responsible killing. If dogs, minks, pigs, and rats are persons, then they are political beings who experience trauma, joy, pain, and liberation. Personhood, as a mode of reflection, pushes both experience and pragmatic possibilities to the foreground; it interrupts abstract provocations about death and killing with concrete possibilities of political action informed by more-than-human experiential perspectives and desires. For example, rather than culling stray dogs in war, there might be a consideration of rabies programmes, dog shelters, and dog welfare centres as ‘new possibilities of living with animals during times of threat and insecurity’.¹³¹ Thinking security through personhood – not as a pure or

¹²⁵Sarah Temmam, et al., ‘Coronaviruses with a SARS-CoV-2-like Receptor-Binding Domain Allowing ACE2-Mediated Entry into Human Cells Isolated from Bats of Indochinese Peninsula’ (2021), preprint available at: {<https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-871965/v1>}.

¹²⁶Worobey et al., ‘The Huanan Market was the Epicenter of SARS-CoV-2 Emergence’.

¹²⁷Conrad M. Freuling et al., ‘Susceptibility of raccoon dogs for experimental SARS-CoV-2 infection’, *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 26:12 (2020), pp. 2982–5.

¹²⁸Worobey et al., ‘The Huanan Market was the Epicenter of SARS-CoV-2 Emergence’.

¹²⁹Youatt, *Interspecies Politics*, p. 138.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*

¹³¹Leep, ‘Stray dogs, post-humanism and cosmopolitan belongingness’, p. 63.

natural category but as a mode of reflection – recasts the question of killability and killing into the terms of experiential complexity and specific possibilities of multispecies flourishing.

Other forms of personhood

To expand our understanding of psychological personhood in IR, the focus of this article has so far been on more-than-human animals as phenomenally conscious persons. In examining more-than-human intelligence, intentionality, and consciousness, this discussion has mostly ignored legal and moral personhood.¹³² But legal, moral, and spiritual perspectives on animals, trees, and rivers offer insights that are critically important to a post-anthropocentric understanding of the spiritual production and legal and moral contestation of what security means. Trees, for instance, can be understood as persons in a variety of cultural contexts.¹³³ While often seen as pejoratively ‘primitive’ and problematically anthropomorphic, the personhood of trees can be part of a spiritual practice, more-than-human kinship, and a way of understanding the divine.¹³⁴ Questions about the security of more-than-human actors must not only be attentive to indigenous viewpoints and knowledge, as Pereira and Gebara along with Fishel importantly suggest,¹³⁵ how we understand the security of rivers or trees is bound up with questions about *what* or *who* trees or rivers *are* – legally, morally, and spiritually.¹³⁶ Along these lines, Pereira and Gebara write about the multispecies politics of deforestation, calling attention to certain indigenous viewpoints on trees as sentient beings.¹³⁷ Relatedly, Fishel advances a set of claims for a more holistic view of multispecies justice that accounts for Indigenous knowledge about forests.¹³⁸ Similarly, the legal personhood of lagoons and rivers, such as the Whanganui River in New Zealand, can be understood as the codification of indigenous perspectives and expressions of tribal sovereignty.¹³⁹ A global indigenous movement has produced local efforts to secure the rights of nature and personhood for more-than-human actors. As was recently asked amid Standing Rock protests and threats to the Missouri River: ‘What if these waters – connected to the Creation Stories of the Lakota communities – were given legal personhood?’¹⁴⁰ A key aspect of these global and local indigenous movements for the security of more-than-human actors can be understood in terms of what I call spiritual personhood.

To think in concrete terms about spiritual personhood and multispecies security, consider, for example, Ojibwe views on wolves and security. The Ojibwe are Anishinaabe people,¹⁴¹ with several tribal nations in the Great Lakes region of the United States. The nations are sovereign actors and semi-autonomous nation-states. While sovereignty is often understood in terms of state

¹³²Due to space constraints, I have also not examined more relational forms of consciousness. For example, see Will W. Adams, ‘Nature’s participatory psyche: A study of consciousness in the shared earth community’, *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 38:1 (2010), pp. 15–39.

¹³³Ravi M. Gupta, ‘Battling serpents, marrying trees: Towards an ecotheology of the Bhāgavata Purāna’, *Journal of Dharma Studies*, 4:1 (2021), pp. 29–37; Carolyn Harwood and Alex K. Ruuska, ‘The personhood of trees: Living artifacts in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan’, *Time and Mind*, 6:2 (2013), pp. 135–57.

¹³⁴David L. Haberman, *People Trees: Worship of Trees in Northern India* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹³⁵Pereira and Gebara, ‘Where the material and the symbolic intertwine’; Fishel, ‘The global tree’.

¹³⁶Moreover, the simplified categories of ‘non-Western’ and ‘indigenous’ can mask the contextual complexities of personhood. In Willerslev’s study of Yukaghirs and personhood, for example, an elk can have a ‘quite different meaning depending on the context in which it is experienced’. Rane Willerslev, *Soul Hunters: Hunting, Animism, and Personhood among the Siberian Yukaghirs* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), p. 116.

¹³⁷Pereira and Gebara, ‘Where the material and the symbolic intertwine’.

¹³⁸Fishel, ‘The global tree’.

¹³⁹Abigail Hutchison, ‘The Whanganui River as a legal person’, *Alternative Law Journal*, 39:3 (2014), pp. 179–82.

¹⁴⁰Kayla Devault, ‘What legal personhood for US rivers would do’, *Yes! Magazine* (12 September 2017).

¹⁴¹It is important to remember, as Kyle Whyte reminds us, that using the term ‘Anishinaabe peoples’ is to invoke ‘broad intellectual traditions connecting Ojibwe, Potawatomi, Odawa, and Mississauga and related peoples who have diverse contemporary and ancient linguistic, cultural, social, and political connections’. Kyle Whyte, ‘Settler colonialism, ecology, and environmental injustice’, *Environment and Society: Advances in Research*, 9 (2018), p. 126.

sovereignty, Ojibwe tribes – through treaties with the US government and court decisions – have a sovereign right to live according to their political traditions on their own lands. The Ojibwe people exercised political authority and sovereignty long before treaties, laws, and legal decisions. However, the context of contemporary Ojibwe sovereignty is shaped by legal doctrines, federal and state laws, and ongoing political pressures from administrative agencies. The sovereign right to protect wolves in the state of Wisconsin offers one recent instance of challenges to Ojibwe sovereignty in the context of multispecies security.¹⁴² Relevant here is an Ojibwe discourse about wolf protection, which reveals a view of personhood and multispecies security underpinned by spiritual connections, indigenous sovereignty, and wolves as brothers.¹⁴³

The interconnected issues of Ojibwe sovereignty and the multispecies security of wolves have become politically and legally fraught in recent times. Shortly after the US federal government removed Gray Wolves from the endangered species list in 2021, Wisconsin permitted the hunting of wolves for the first time since 2014. By law, a wolf hunt in Wisconsin requires that Ojibwe tribes have a treaty-protected right to an equal share of the ‘harvest quota’ of wolves. In 2021, the state set a ‘harvest quota’ of two hundred wolves, a number wrongfully determined without meaningful input from Ojibwe authorities. The Ojibwe tribes secured licences to kill 81 wolves, while the other 119 licences were granted to other hunters. But the Ojibwe tribes do not use these licences to kill; rather, they secure them to not use them in order to offer some protection to wolves from the hunt. In what was described as a disastrous event for Ojibwe tribes, the quota was immediately exceeded in the 2021 hunt. Hunters killed at least 218 wolves in the first few days – almost one hundred over the legal limit.¹⁴⁴ The President of Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians referred to the hunt as ‘the slaughter of wolves’.¹⁴⁵

There is a tradition in Ojibwe thought that views wolves as much more than predators or huntable animals. For many Ojibwe people, wolves (*ma’iinganag* in the *Ojibwemowin* language) ‘are often referred to as brothers and sisters’.¹⁴⁶ Wolves are understood in terms of intentionality and kinship, and a spiritual connection informs their security commitment to protect *ma’iingan*. While *ma’iingan* is not explicitly described as a ‘person’, Ojibwe traditions articulate wolves in terms of their ‘highly developed and complex hunting methods’ as well as ‘their intimate, attentive, and lengthy parenting’.¹⁴⁷ Because wolves are ‘an inherent and crucial component of their identity as sovereign people’, and because of ‘a deep sense of cultural kinship’ with wolves, Ojibwe tribes have ‘traditionally protected wolves as brothers’.¹⁴⁸ Wolves, in this sense, are both psychological and spiritual persons.

The spiritual connection with wolves has deep roots in Ojibwe thought. As Robert Shimek from the White Earth Nation puts it, ‘The Wolf is my Brother! These words have been heard among Ojibwe Anishinaabe communities of the western Great Lakes Region since time immemorial’.¹⁴⁹ Oral traditions, described in the *Mishomis Book*, explain how the Creator sent

¹⁴²The ‘Ojibwe Nation is one of the three largest native nations in North America’ and there are six Ojibwe bands in the state of Wisconsin. Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, available at: {<https://www.badriver-nsn.gov/history/>}.

¹⁴³For an early ethnographic study on Ojibwe worldviews and ‘other-than-human persons’, see A. Irving Hollowell, ‘Ojibwa ontology, behavior, and world view’, in Dennis Tedlock and Barbara Tedlock (eds), *Teachings from the American Earth: Indian Religion and Philosophy* (New York, NY: Liveright, 1975), pp. 141–78.

¹⁴⁴Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, ‘Comments on the DEIS for the Proposed Enbridge Line 5 Relocation Project’ (15 April 2022), p. 51, available at: {https://earthjustice.org/sites/default/files/files/bad_river_band_comment_letter_-_to_wdnr_04.15.2022.pdf}.

¹⁴⁵Paul A. Smith, ‘Ojibwe tribes file lawsuit to stop November wolf hunt, saying their treaty-protected rights have been violated’, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (21 September 2021), available at: {<https://www.jsonline.com/story/sports/outdoors/2021/09/21/six-wisconsin-tribes-ask-federal-judge-prevent-2021-wolf-season/5797482001/>}.

¹⁴⁶Sanders, ‘Wolves, lone and pack’, p. 1275.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 1274.

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 1274–5.

¹⁴⁹Robert Shimek, ‘The Wolf is My Brother’ (October 2013), available at: {http://www.badriver-nsn.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/NRD_Wildlife_Maiingan_Anishinaabe.pdf}.

Ma'iingan to the Original Man to be like brothers, and explore the world together.¹⁵⁰ Ojibwe traditions further tell us how the Ojibwe people and *Ma'iingan* have experienced the world in similar ways, in terms of partnerships, hardships, and land dispossession.¹⁵¹ In the context of the killing of wolves, one member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa argued that 'no matter how long we have been looked at as not being a human being, not being worth living – the same thing that's happening with *Ma'iingan* – we are still persevering through all of that, and so will *Ma'iingan*.'¹⁵² The security of wolves, therefore, is also related to the security of the Ojibwe people – their traditions, spiritual values, and sovereignty. In spiritual terms, *Ma'iingan* is a brother deserving of respect. The protection of wolves is not only a political and legal expression of tribal sovereignty but a moral and spiritual responsibility. This Ojibwe understanding of wolves as brothers certainly encompasses aspects of psychological personhood, and it also involves a scientific approach to the protection of wolves. But it is also a spiritual perspective on personhood and multispecies security. As Brian Bisonette put it, there is a 'spiritual, biological, and historical significance of *Ma'iingan*' to the Ojibwe people.¹⁵³ In their aspirations to exercise treaty rights and provide security for wolves (*ma'iinganag*), their more-than-human brothers are spiritually connected to the Anishinaabe:

In the spiritual laws we follow as Anishinaabe, the *ma'iingan* is our brother. It is like the brother in our families. The *ma'iingan* is no different. It is part of our clans, our families; an extension of our families. So when *ma'iingan* is being hunted and killed, you are killing our brother. It is no different. When a *ma'iingan* is killed it is like you are murdering one of our family members, one of our kids.¹⁵⁴

These Ojibwe perspectives point to the need to accommodate a spiritual understanding of more-than-human personhood that is connected to – but goes beyond – psychological, legal, and moral personhood. These forms of personhood are not mutually exclusive; in many ways they fit together and reinforce each other. But there is a spiritual quality of personhood that sustains a particular orientation to multispecies security in this context. To understand *ma'iingan* as a brother does not require claims of rationality or consciousness, even though *ma'iingan* can be understood in or on those terms. It does not necessitate a scientific or philosophical conception of wolf personhood. *Ma'iingan*'s brotherhood is rooted and forever established within the spiritual histories and futures of the Ojibwe people. 'To the Anishinaabe, the *Ma'iingan* (wolves) are our brothers. The legends and stories tell us as brothers we walk hand in hand together.'¹⁵⁵ Any specific language of 'wolf personhood' in the context of Ojibwe discourse is, therefore, superfluous. *Ma'iingan* is not only a person but much more. Indeed, others suggest that the bond of brotherhood 'fails to capture the full nature of the relationship, saying that Wolf and Man were really one being, parts of a greater whole', even though the Creator eventually instructed them to go separate (though interconnected) paths.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰Edward Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway* (Hayward, WI: Indian Country Communications, 1988).

¹⁵¹Ibid.

¹⁵²Ben Binversie and Jack Hurbanis, 'Bad River Band wildlife specialist says state leaders need to learn from tribes on wolf relationship', *Milwaukee NPR* (15 March 2021), available at: {<https://www.wuwm.com/podcast/lake-effect-segments/2021-03-15/bad-river-band-wildlife-specialist-says-state-leaders-need-to-learn-from-tribes-on-wolf-relationship>}.

¹⁵³US District Court (Western District of Wisconsin), Declaration Of Brian Bisonette, Civil Case No. 3:21-cv-00597 (30 September 2021), p. 4.

¹⁵⁴Declaration Of Marvin Defoe, p. 6.

¹⁵⁵John Myers, 'Wisconsin tribes sue to stop November wolf hunt', *Duluth News Tribune* (21 September 2021), available at: {<https://www.duluthnewstribune.com/sports/northland-outdoors/wisconsin-tribes-sue-to-stop-november-wolf-hunt>}.

¹⁵⁶Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, 'Ma'iingan relationship plan 1837/1842 ceded territory', p. 5.

Concluding thoughts

As a set of reflections on multispecies international politics, this Special Issue challenges the grounds on which our understanding of global politics and security are predicated. The contributions of this issue pursue an understanding of global political life in which security is generated by multispecies encounters and cuts across species lines. As this introduction suggests, interrogation of more-than-human security in terms of personhood is one starting point for remembering other ways of thinking about these encounters. All human concepts about more-than-human subjects obscure and illuminate, simultaneously limiting and enhancing our understanding of others. But certain forms of more-than-human personhood, I hope, can be a means of negotiating an understanding of the individual and collective subjects of security that is fuller and more attentive to the experiential complexity of a more-than-human world.

Twenty-five years ago, R. B. J. Walker argued that arguments about security 'cannot be dissociated from even more basic claims about who we think we are and how we might act together'.¹⁵⁷ In concert with the other articles in this Special Issue, this introduction article offers a challenge to the question of who 'we think we are' in relation to security questions involving more-than-human subjects. It has argued for an understanding of more-than-human animals as phenomenally conscious persons as a means of assessing the experiential entanglement of human and more-than-human security. IR scholars have recently examined questions about personhood and consciousness in the context of states, and they have viewed security politics in terms of the affective experiences and practices of states and humans. But more-than-human animals also have affective experiences of security. This introduction demonstrates a view of more-than-human animals as persons who feel and process the world in complex ways, and who have their own perspectives on security. This personhood vantage suggests that IR scholars attend to questions about not only how more-than-human life becomes a security threat but also the multispecies *experience* of becoming security threats. In analysing Ojibwe articulations of personhood, I also consider ways to better address the intersection of spirituality, interspecies relations, and security.

Beyond arguments about personhood, this article hopes to provide a more inclusive framework for studying more-than-human experiences of global politics and security. Along with the other contributions to the Special Issue, it seeks to create space for a broad range of approaches interested in questions about global politics and security that are not strictly confined to human experiences. This Special Issue offers one step towards a broader agenda of understanding global politics in terms of interspecies politics and multispecies security. The purposes are to advance a theoretical agenda attentive to more-than-human personhood within global politics and to do the challenging empirical work of understanding more-than-human experiences of security. As many of the authors suggest, we might also imagine alternative political and ethical conditions that structure the experience of interspecies relations. In sum, the contributions of this Special Issue involve mixing and moving between theory, imagination, and empirics to shift our focus beyond the human. The articles offer paths towards rethinking how *we* – understood in multispecies terms – might act together. To add to R. B. J. Walker's argument mentioned above, the contributions reveal how claims about human security cannot be dissociated from more-than-human security.

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¹⁵⁷R. B. J. Walker, 'The subject of security', in Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams (eds), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 66.

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