

## Beyond Meat? Taking Violence Against Non-Human Animals Seriously as a Form of Social Harm.

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### Chapter Abstract

*This chapter offers an overview of non-speciesist approaches to harm, arguing that violence against non-human animals constitutes a form of social harm. Non-human animals are part of the social world, and violence against non-human animals is socially harmful in its individual and institutional forms, to human and non-human animals alike, and to the environment. Central to this is an acknowledgment of the interconnectedness of capitalism, violence and other forms of oppression, such as sexism and racism. To conclude, the chapter identifies potential positive actions that can be taken to address this violence, for example, including green criminology and critical animal studies in the curriculum, lending support to environmental causes, and promoting vegan and plant-based diets.*

### Introduction

If a single death is a tragedy, and a million deaths are a statistic, then how do we understand the 70 billion non-human animals killed every year for food, according to the UN (Sanders, 2018)? Violence towards non-human animals is often entirely legal and socially normalised and unproblematic, and the plight of non-human animals tends to stand beyond the realms of concern for most social scientists (Peggs, 2013). But that does not make it right. Whilst accepting the central zemiological premise that “*crime has no ontological reality*” (Hillyard and Tombs, 2004: 11), this chapter rests on the foundation that harm is real, embodied and endured by living beings, human and non-human. Over fifteen years ago, Hillyard et al (2004) compelled criminologists to consider forms of social harm rendered invisible in mainstream criminology. As revolutionary and transformative as that clarion call to ‘take harm seriously’ was, in largely ignoring harm to non-human animals, the text reproduced an anthropocentric hierarchy of visible harm. Here we argue that, for zemiology to flourish as an approach, this implicit hierarchy must be abandoned and harms endured by all living beings, human and non-human, must be made visible. Adopting an explicitly zemiological approach, yet disregarding the myriad harms done to sentient non-human animals

imprisoned, tortured, and murdered under capitalism (and other political and socio-economic systems), risks undermining the core aims of the zemiological project. As well as offering an overview of critical perspectives in green criminology and critical animal studies, we argue that violence against non-human animals is serious and significant, cannot be ignored and must be rejected.

This chapter has two primary aims. First, it offers readers a partial overview of critical scholarship concerning violence against non-human animals. It draws together a range of core concepts, chiefly from the interdisciplinary fields of green criminology and critical animal studies to establish some of the theoretical foundations of non-speciesist approaches to social harm. Second, it outlines the case for conceptualising violence against non-human animals as a form of social harm, through examining various dimensions of harm. The argument is supported by contemporary scholarship, and in making it, the chapter contributes to on-going debates about the necessity for social science to reject, explicitly, violence towards non-human animals. The chapter also outlines potential steps to address the harms identified.

## Background

This section outlines some of the foundational concepts that have shaped the interdisciplinary terrain of scholarship concerning violence against animals. Whilst brevity precludes an exhaustive overview, texts for further reading are suggested at the end.

## Green Criminology

Whilst the discipline of criminology is largely founded on anthropocentric assumptions, non-human animals have not been entirely invisible within criminological research, and are the focus of research and writing particularly within green criminology. White (2013: 27) defines green criminology as a perspective that concentrates on exposing criminal or harmful environmental actions, and *“provide[s] detailed descriptions and analyses of phenomena such as the illegal trade of animals, illegal logging, dumping of toxic waste, air pollution, and threats to biodiversity”*. Nurse, (2013: 3) argues that green criminology has the potential to contest and upend common-sense understandings of crime, for example through revealing how *“harm to animals causes harm to wider human society”*. Green criminology does not

imply a specific theoretical approach, rather a tendency towards environmental topics of interest, which can include non-human animals (White, 2013).

However, the positioning of non-human animals within the field of green criminology remains unclear and contested (Taylor and Fitzgerald, 2018) with different traditions within green criminology that rest on occasionally conflicting political and ethical assumptions. For example, White and Heckenberg (2014) identify three approaches to justice within green criminology; human rights and environmental justice approaches, which centre the impact of environmental crime and harm on humans and see environmental rights as an extension of human rights; ecological justice perspectives, which see humans as one component of complex eco-systems that should be preserved for their own sake; and animal rights and species justice perspectives, which are chiefly concerned with harm to non-human animals.

## Species Justice Approaches

### *Speciesism*

Before discussing species justice approaches within criminology, it is useful to examine the philosophical roots of the concept of 'speciesism'. The term was first used by British philosopher Richard Ryder in the 1970s (Ryder, 1989), but came to wider prominence after the release of Peter Singer's highly influential text 'Animal Liberation' in 1975. Singer expanded on these ideas, presenting a utilitarian case for the liberation of non-human animals. The concept of speciesism deconstructs popularly held beliefs around human and non-human animals, examining the different and discriminatory ways that species are valued and treated (Ryder, 2000). It challenges justifications for violence and exploitation, and the fundamental assumption that human animals are superior to non-human animals.

Singer (1975) asserts that non-human animals deserve ethical consideration, as sentient beings able to feel pain. It is legally and morally permissible to harm and slaughter non-human animals on an industrial scale globally, whereas, the slaughter of human animals is almost always legally or morally proscribed (Ryder, 1998). Speciesism can therefore be understood as a hegemonic ideological assumption that allows practices of violence against non-human animals to abound. Speciesism also helps explain the relative invisibility of animals in social science, as social science broadly reproduces the speciesist logic that non-human animals are socially -and sociologically- unimportant (Peggs, 2013). Tom Regan's

(1983) 'The Case for Animal Rights' developed these ideas further, arguing that non-human animals possess inherent rights as 'subjects of a life' and must not be used as means to an end. Regan's work was significant in developing a deontological basis for animal rights, contrasting with Singer's utilitarian arguments, which were not rights-based.

Acknowledging and accepting that non-human animals deserve moral consideration does not necessitate a specific coherent political or policy response. Indeed, there have always been significant divisions among those who consider themselves animal advocates, for example between animal welfare perspectives, which seek better conditions (bigger cages), and animal liberation perspectives, which seek the abolition of animal industries altogether (empty cages) (Regan, 2005). This chapter situates itself within the liberationist paradigm.

The concept of speciesism has influenced green criminology, particularly among those within species justice approaches. Piers Bierne (1999) sought to develop a 'non-speciesist' approach within criminology, centred on the notion that animals have the right to not be killed, and to be treated with respect. He argues that abuse of non-human animals should be a concern for criminologists because: non-human animals are already objects of specific legislation, therefore within the remit of criminological concern; animal abuse has been used to predict situations of inter-human violence; and animal abuse is interconnected with other forms of oppression. More recently, Bierne (2018) has used the term theriocide to conceptualise the diverse forms of human actions that cause the deaths of animals, promoting species justice and non-speciesist approaches within and beyond the discipline of criminology.

### *Non-human victimology*

Species justice approaches have also considered how domestic and wild animals should be protected through criminal law (Nurse, 2016). The UK Animal Welfare Act 2006 enshrines a legal duty to protect animal welfare. Still, non-human animals are often reduced legally to objects or property and generally not recognised as victims, even when direct targets of criminality (Nurse, 2016), as they lack the required legal status (Nurse, 2013). For Flynn and Hall (2017: 299) "*victimology has been almost exclusively anthropocentric in its outlook*" arguing instead for a 'non-speciesist' victimology, which accounts for harms done to non-human animals. If victimology is primarily the study of victims and we accept that animals

are victimised, this offers a compelling argument for the inclusion of animals within victimology. Flynn and Hall (2017) highlight forms of animal abuse and harm that are already criminalized, (an acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the inclusion of harm to non-human animals in victimology, even within a legalistic approach), and they argue that as victimology can help guide policy and support social change, it should include non-human animal victims.

### Critical Animal Studies

Where green criminology lacks a coherent underlying ideological or conceptual framework, critical animal studies (CAS) rests on explicitly intersectional abolitionist principles. CAS developed alongside animal studies more broadly, but is committed to understanding the mechanisms that allow humans to exploit other species (Taylor and Fitzgerald, 2018). In 'Introducing Critical Animal Studies', Best et al. (2007: 4) illustrate what makes CAS distinct from much of the preceding animal studies:

*'Although scholars working in animal studies have made significant contributions to our understanding of the historical, sociological, and philosophical aspects of human/nonhuman animal relations, the discipline is strangely detached from the dire plight of nonhuman animals, human beings, and the Earth.'*

Nocella et al (2014) illustrate that CAS increasingly provides counter-narratives to prevailing research on non-human animals in academia, as either a-political or exploitative (e.g. animals experiments). CAS responds with overtly political research reimagining human-animal relations in a non-exploitative and non-speciesist way, ultimately striving for liberation for all (human and non-human animals) from oppressive capitalist structures (Best, 2009; Best et al, 2007; Nibert, 2017; Nocella et al., 2014). Best et al.'s (2007) introduction to CAS outlined ten principles, which cement its core aims: CAS must be interdisciplinary, political (rather than pseudo-objective), employ praxis, advance understandings of commonalities of different oppressions, and be anti-capitalist and anti-hierarchical. Furthermore, it must nurture alliance politics, champion 'total liberation' (human, non-human and environmental), work to deconstruct social binary thinking and, finally, it must encourage critical dialogue across a wide range of groups (within and,

fundamentally, outside of academia). CAS therefore seeks an intersectional account of speciesism and social justice (Crenshaw, 1989; Matsuoka and Sorenson, 2018).

Nibert (2017) identifies fundamental connections between the systematic oppression of non-human animals, environmental destruction and the everyday relentless harms caused by capitalism, to humans alongside other animals. As global capitalism is damaging to the planet, people and animals, anti-speciesist approaches must engage with the exploitative nature of capitalism. For Best (2009: 42):

*“The profit imperative overwhelms the moral imperative; value is reduced to exchange value; everything, including human labor, becomes a commodity... In pursuit of the development and accumulation imperatives that drive its dynamic grow-or-die economy, capitalism devours nature, species, human lives, and indigenous cultures.”*

Much CAS research has illustrated how the oppression of animals is connected to human oppression (Adams, 2010; Matsuoka and Sorenson, 2018; Nocella, et. al., 2014; Taylor and Twine, 2015). These themes are developed later.

### **Cognitive Dissonance and Carnism**

In order to employ a zemiological perspective to non-human animals it is helpful to engage with how CAS has problematised and re-imagined the processes enabling harm to occur. In many societies, there are expectations that people will care for animals (though the specificities vary culturally) alongside assumptions that people eat animals and animal products (Loughman et. al., 2010). This disjuncture is commonly conceptualised as ‘the meat paradox’ (Bratanova et. al., 2011; Buttlar and Walther, 2018; 2019; Joy, 2010; Loughman et. al., 2010). Buttlar and Walther (2018) found that meat-eaters employ ‘moral disengagement’ strategies to circumvent the discomfort they feel due to ‘the meat paradox’. Loughman, et. al’s (2010) study suggested that to continue to enjoy eating meat, people perceive animals as unworthy and unfeeling.

Carnism is a fairly recent theoretical development referring to the dominant paradigm that rarely problematizes the ethics of meat consumption (Joy, 2010). Carnist

discourses, perpetuated through the media and the state/government (Joy, 2010), allows sentient, living beings to be perceived only in abstract terms or as objects. The concept of cognitive dissonance has been employed to explain how carnist hegemony persists within populations that generally express sympathetic views to non-human animals (Piazza et al., 2015; Bratanova et al., 2011; Loughman et al., 2010; Festinger, 1957). It describes the stress individuals feel from holding conflicting beliefs. Joy (2010) explains that people employ strategies to counter its resultant stress, including denial, justification of suffering, and objectification of non-human animals. Nibert (2017) builds on his influential earlier work (Nibert, 2002) in demonstrating how the biological manipulation of sentient beings, as objects and commodities for profit, is made possible by hegemonic framing of such cruelty as necessary. Within that hegemonic framework, those who practice non-violence towards animals are often subject to ridicule, misrepresentation and hostility (Stephens Griffin, 2017; Stephens Griffin and Griffin, 2019; MacInnis and Hodson 2015; Cole and Morgan 2011).

The theories of 'speciesism' and 'carnism' explain dominant values underpinning animal exploitation, where 'the meat paradox' and 'cognitive dissonance' help to illustrate the discomfort felt as a result of harm to animals caused by humans and the strategies employed to enable such harm to continue despite it.

### **Non-human animals and Social Harm**

We now drill down into developments in the study of violence against animals. We argue that violence against non-human animals represents a form of social harm that zemiological approaches must resist. Beginning with a discussion of animals and the social world, this section explores three dimensions through which violence against non-human animals constitutes social harm: Harm to non-human animals; harm to human-animals, and harm to the environment. The unfolding argument builds a non-speciesist case that non-human animals are part of the social world, and must be taken into account in conceptions of social harm.

Social harm perspectives allow us to move beyond individualised notions of crime and criminals to reveal the myriad visible and invisible forms of harm caused by organisations, corporations and nation states. Hillyard et al (2004: 1) argue that:

*“the principal aim of a social harm approach is to move beyond the narrow confines of criminology with its focus on harms defined by whether or not they constitute a crime, to a focus on all the different types of harms, which people experience from the cradle to the grave”.*

Hillyard and Tomb’s (2004) social harm approach encompasses various dimensions of harm. Primary among these are physical harms, whether direct, indirect, deliberate or accidental. A social harm approach also encompasses emotional and psychological harms, financial/economic harms, and may also encompass notions of ‘cultural safety’, relating to autonomy and access to means of development and growth. However, the dominant social harm approach is explicitly anthropocentric in its focus on harm experienced by humans.

The zemiological assertion that crime has no ontological reality, and that criminology perpetuates the ‘myth of crime’, is clearly expressed through the differential treatment of harm to non-human animals under criminal law. It is legal to kill some, and illegal to kill others (Herzog, 2010; Joy, 2010); that which is ‘criminal’ is often arbitrary and, in accepting legal definitions of crime, the discipline of criminology contributes to this incoherence. Similarly, the zemiological assertion that ‘crime’ excludes many serious harms is evidenced by socially harmful animal industries being largely absent from criminological research or teaching. As Hillyard (2004: 2) argues: “it makes no sense to separate out harms, which can be defined as criminal, from all other types of harm. All forms of harms we argue must be considered and analysed together. Otherwise a very distorted view of the world will be produced”. A social harm approach provides the means to address the failure of traditional criminology to consider these hidden harms against non-human animals.

### **Non-human animals and the social**

Non-human animals are social beings, they have social relationships and exist in a social world, with and without humans. This is perhaps obvious when discussing companion species like dogs and cats, but perhaps not when it comes to species less visible in everyday life. Take cows, for example, whose flesh and secretions are widely consumed and whose lives and deaths are seldom culturally visible. Cows have been shown to be intelligent with complex cognitive, emotional and social characteristics (Marino and Allen, 2017). Cows can be optimistic and pessimistic, they are impacted by painful and stressful experiences and



have revelatory 'eureka' moments (Marino and Allen, 2017). Cows protect their young fiercely, and can recognise 50-70 of their friends (Marino and Allen, 2017; Fraser and Broom, 1990). This is consistent with what we understand as fundamental to existing within a social realm. As social beings, many animals mourn the loss of companions, as observed in many species including dogs, cats, rabbits, rats, horses and birds (King, 2013). Expressions of grief are measured in patterns of eating, sleeping, social behaviour, and visible expressions of affect, recognisable in human responses to loss (King, 2013). The capacity to grieve for companions further emphasises their social experiences and the suffering experienced by animals embroiled in the animal industrial complex.

Just as non-human animals are themselves social beings, non-human animals are part of the social lives of human-animals, both literally and symbolically, yet are often excluded from traditional social science (Peggs, 2013). We live with and among non-human animals; we form meaningful relationships with them; many aspects of society rely on their exploitation; we engage with cultural representations of them daily and these form the basis for meaning-making especially in childhood (Cole and Stewart, 2014). Yet, as Tovey (2003: 197) argues "*to read most sociological texts, one might never know that society is populated by non-human as well as human animals*". Social science disciplines have been constructed as if nature and non-human animals are unimportant (Murphy, 1994), perpetuating the invisibility of non-human animals in conversations about the social.

Violence is a social phenomenon, socially organised and socially institutionalised in various forms (Cudworth, 2015; Stanko, 2001), and non-human animals, as part of the social world, cannot be viewed as outside of this phenomenon. Cudworth (2015) uses the work of Tombs (2007) to illustrate how violence is often linked to widespread forms of inequality and social exclusion. Peggs (2013) argues that the recent increased focus on non-human animals is characterised by a lack of engagement with oppression, as a central feature of human-non-human relations. This poses a real problem for social science.

### **Eating Meat as Social Harm**

We now move to explore how violence to non-human animals can be understood as socially harmful to non-human animals, human-animals, and to the environment. These categories

necessarily and inevitably overlap; however, these headings provide for greater clarity in discussion.

### Harmful to non-human animals

Whilst it may seem obvious that violence towards non-human animals causes them harm, it is worth examining the dimension of this harm in more depth. Cudworth (2015: 14) argues "*violence towards domesticated animals is routinized, systemic and legitimated. It is embedded in structures of authority, such as the nation state, and in formations of social domination*". Globally, 99% of all domesticated animals are commodities in animal agriculture (Williams and de Mello, 2007: 14). Every year, 55 billion plus land-based non-human animals are killed in the farming industry (Mitchell, 2011). But even those domesticated animals that inhabit more privileged positions are systematically killed, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals estimates that between three and four million 'stray dogs and cats' were killed by shelters in 2012 alone (ASPCA, 2014 in Cudworth, 2015). We must also acknowledge other animal exploiting industries also cause harm to non-human animals, for example, global wildlife trafficking, which poses a threat to multiple species, not just charismatic megafauna<sup>1</sup> (Arroyo-Quiroz and Wyatt, 2019).

Moving from the macro-picture, the harms faced by non-human animals on an individualised basis are varied and severe. Continuing with the earlier example, cows have a natural life expectancy of around twenty years, but on average rarely reach six before they are slaughtered (Mohd Nor, et al 2013). During the course of a cow's drastically shortened lifespan, they can expect to suffer a variety of mutilations and forms of violence against their bodies. These include disbudding, the removal of horn buds; teat-removal, the removal of a 'supernumerary teat' with a blade or scissors (often without anaesthetic); tagging, of one or both ears; tail docking, done with a hot iron, by crushing, or by stopping blood flow with a rubber band; branding; either by hot iron, or freeze branding; and castration, which can happen at any age depending on the farmer's preference (Compassion in World Farming, 2012). The violence they experience is sometimes sexual in nature, relating as it

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<sup>1</sup> 'Charismatic megafauna' are species of animals who have symbolic or cultural significance or who are broadly liked by humans (such as Giant Pandas and Humpback Whales), and therefore more likely to be valued and seen as worthy of human interest, respect and protection.

does to reproductive systems. For cows to produce milk, they need to give birth. As a result, female dairy cows are kept in a perpetual state of pregnancy, usually by artificial insemination. One informal industry term used to describe the device used for artificial insemination is 'rape rack' (Adams, 2010). After giving birth, calves are separated from their mothers very quickly, so that humans can consume the milk (Compassion in World Farming, 2012). Cows and calves alike are known to respond to this separation emotionally, wailing aloud, with studies suggesting increased 'eye white', an indicator of anxiety and distress, following separation (Marino and Allen, 2017). Calves are then either sold or reared as replacement stock; many male calves and surplus female calves, are slaughtered for veal (usually at around 5-7 months). Milking can be very painful and can happen as many as three times a day (Compassion in World Farming, 2012). Once lactation ends, this process repeats, with cows giving birth on average every 400 days (Compassion in World Farming, 2012). This continues until they can no longer yield milk. Cows are then killed variously: by a non-penetrating captive bolt gun or electrical stunning, whereby they are stunned or electrocuted unconscious, then have their throats slit; by a penetrating captive bolt-gun, whereby a rod penetrates their skull to destroy their brain; or shot dead if injured and unable to travel to the abattoir (Compassion in World Farming, 2012).

This barely scratches the surface of how animal industries are harmful to non-human animals. These examples underline further the necessity of viewing violence towards animals within conceptions of social harm.

### **Harmful to human-animals**

We now explore how violence against non-human animals can be understood as harmful to human animals. Research indicates eating meat can be harmful to personal health. Springmann et al (2016) suggest that switching to lower-meat diets could save around 8 million human lives globally, over the next 30 years. A 2019 study found that plant-based diets are associated with a lower risk of incident cardiovascular disease and cardiovascular disease mortality (Kim, et al 2019). Another found that men adopting vegan diets had a 35% reduced risk of developing prostate cancer (World Cancer Research Fund, 2016). Qian et al (2019) found that adopting a plant-based diet can reduce the risk of developing diabetes by 23%. The World Health Organization advises as the first step towards a healthy lifestyle: *"Eat a nutritious diet based on a variety of foods originating mainly from plants, rather than*

*animals.*" (W.H.O., 2019: np). Research has demonstrated numerous negative effects of slaughterhouses on workers & communities, with empirical data suggesting that slaughterhouse employment increases total arrest rates, arrests for violent crimes, rape, and other sex offenses relative to other industries (Fitzgerald, Kalof and Dietz, 2009).

The potential harm from animal products go beyond the individual consumer. There are global health risks posed to human and non-human populations, from the presence of anti-microbial resistant bacteria in animal products for human consumption (Guetiya Wadoun et al, 2016; Losasso et al, 2016). Growth in multi-resistant microbes is often partly, if not largely, credited to the over and mis-use of anti-biotics in farmed animals (Anomaly, 2009; Groot and van't Hooft, 2016), particularly due to the accelerated spread of intensive farming practices in recent years (Grace, 2015). The effects are already identifiable, with some infection-causing bacteria having developed resistance to most, if not all, available anti-biotics. The World Health Organisation recommends reduced anti-biotic use in farmed animals to combat the global risk of anti-biotic resistance. (W.H.O, 2017)

### ***Speciesism, Capitalism and Exploitation***

Capitalism is by its very nature exploitative, and animal industries exemplify that exploitation at its most stark and cruel, as discussed by Nibert (2017). The accelerationist expansionism of global capitalism has been a driving force behind the growth in animal industries (Taylor and Twine, 2014). Drawing on Noske (1989), Twine (2012: 23) discusses the "*partly opaque and multiple set of networks and relationships between the corporate (agricultural) sector, governments, and public and private science*" as the '*animal-industrial complex*'. These networks reinforce and perpetuate the objectified, exploited status of non-human animals under capitalism.

A criticism frequently levelled at those who refuse to consume non-human animals is that it is hypocritical for them to advocate for non-human animals whilst ignoring the plight of human workers, who suffer to provide plant-based alternatives to animal products. This argument ignores the treatment of workers in animal industries, where the exploitation is also often appalling. According to Milmo, Heal and Wasley (2018: np) "*employees in slaughterhouses and meat processing plants are subjected to some of the most dangerous working conditions in the United Kingdom, with 100 workers suffering major injuries -*

*including eye damage and crush injuries to the head - in a single year*". Acknowledging the exploitation of workers is essential to critiquing capitalist exploitation. But when it is weaponized against veganism, ignoring the exploitation inherent in all sectors of industrial capitalism, the suggestion that plant-based industries are inherently more harmful to workers than animal industries, is demonstrably false. Veganism does not represent ethical purity (for example, non-human animals are routinely killed in the production of plant-based products) and we should be sceptical of vegan consumerism, which reproduces harmful and uneven relationships of production under capitalism. We should also be wary of efforts to reduce and individualise these debates into arguments about the morality of one person versus another. The exploitation of non-human animals is a structural concern, and must be part of a wider struggle against capitalism.

### *Speciesism, Sexism and Patriarchy*

Zemiological approaches might usefully reflect on the ways that harm to non-human animals and the environment can correspond closely with sexism and patriarchy, both in underlying justifications and effects. Linked to the destructive nature of capitalism, the entitlement that underlies patriarchy has been highlighted by ecofeminist Salleh (1989: 26) as the same attitude that allows humans to feel entitled to exploit animals: *"There is a parallel in men's thinking between their 'right' to exploit nature, on the one hand, and the use they make of women on the other"*.

Carol Adams' (1990) hugely influential and enduringly relevant text 'The Sexual Politics of Meat', connected feminism and vegetarianism. It was significant in explicitly outlining the interconnectedness of patriarchy and speciesism, and in calling for those who purport to be feminists to acknowledge the patriarchy intrinsic to animal industries; *"Not only is animal defence the theory and vegetarianism the practice, but feminism is the theory and vegetarianism is part of the practice"* (Adams, 1990: 217). She identified many continuities between patriarchy and animal exploitation, for example, how meat consumption has been linked to male strength/virility, essentialist notions of a hunter/gatherer gender binary between men and women and how compassion in general, and especially towards animals/earth, has been feminized and devalued accordingly. Adams (1990) also highlighted the necessary sexual violence of the meat and dairy industries, for example the huge reliance on exploitation of female reproductive systems, as seen in the

above example (e.g. milk, breeding, eggs), as well as drawing conceptual linkages between war, violence and hunting. To destroy patriarchy, we must destroy every part of it: *“we have to stop fragmenting activism; we cannot polarize human and animal suffering since they are interrelated”* (Adams, 1990: 15). For Adams, to practice feminism one must also practice non-violence towards animals.

Taking an intersectional feminist perspective, Lapina and Leer (2016: 89) illustrate the relationship between meat, class, gender and sexuality in their study of ‘meatscapes’ in Copenhagen. These are food outlets where meat is glorified and codified as masculine, *‘conveying ideas about masculine, carnivorous bonding/community and a masculine, heterosexual, middle-class gaze.’* Sobal (2005: 136) argues that *‘foods are objects inscribed with many meanings, representing ethnicity, nationality, region, class, age, sexuality, culture and (perhaps most importantly) gender’*. For Bogueva et al (2017), links between red meat and national identity, social status and masculinity in Australia help explain how relationships between human and non-human animals are related to other oppressive societal systems.

Academics have identified links between violence against non-human animals and violence against humans (Ascione, 1998), which is also well established in popular cultural narratives. Macdonald’s (1963) ‘Homicidal Triad’ supports the notion that animal abuse is a warning sign for other forms of violence; bedwetting, fire starting and animal cruelty in childhood can be predictive of violent serial killers. Whilst arguing that an empirical basis for a link does exist, Nurse (2016) argues that the relationship between animal abuse and interpersonal violence is complex, depending on multiple factors. Some animal abusers also engage in forms of spousal abuse, child abuse and stranger violence, whilst others confine their abusive behaviour to non-human animals (Nurse, 2011). The same author discusses the ‘progression thesis’, whereby offenders begin with animal abuse, and then progress into human abuse. From this perspective, violence against non-human animals can also be harmful to human-animals, but, as Nurse highlights, working to prevent harm to non-human animals, can also help protect victims/survivors.

### *Speciesism, Racism and Colonialism*

For Harper (2010), women of colour practicing non-violence towards animals, through veganism, can represent a means of resisting oppression and '*decolonising black bodies from the legacy of racialized colonialism*' (Harper, 2010: 157). She notes a tendency for mainstream veganism and animal liberation struggles to dismiss or marginalize people of colour, and to de-centre anti-racist struggles. Racism within animal advocacy goes further than just a failure to acknowledge and problematize whiteness, with groups like PETA also actively perpetuating racist tropes and ideas (Harper, 2010; Heuchan, 2015). Harper's work rejects the assumed whiteness of veganism and animal liberation struggles, underlining the necessity for animal rights movements to be at the forefront of anti-racist work too.

The CAS objective of 'Total Liberation' of humans, non-humans and the environment, according to Colling et al (2014), is only achievable through radical decolonization. Drawing upon Frantz Fanon's (1968) work, they identify commonalities between the struggle against white supremacy and colonialism, and against violence towards animals, for example through the characterisation of colonized peoples as animals and processes of dehumanisation and objectification. Animal enterprises exist in direct continuity with the colonial projects of slavery and genocide (Colling et al, 2014). Therefore, CAS must be committed to dismantling the structures of white supremacy and colonialism. Whilst acknowledging commonalities in the logic and justifications of the oppressor, intersectional perspectives tend to reject narratives that directly equate animal exploitation with human slavery or the holocaust, which has been a feature of messaging in the area (Nagesh, 2015). This is because such comparisons can be seen to co-opt another group's brutal history of oppression to make a point. Attempts to 'humanise' animals in this way, can easily lead to 'dehumanisation' of victims of genocide and slavery, which are phenomena situated within their own very specific social context and structures. Human-animal suffering and non-human animal suffering are fundamentally different. We must reject violence towards non-human animals without dehumanising victims of genocide, slavery and colonialism in the process.

Further connections have been drawn between the logic of racism and speciesism. Gambert and Linne (2018) highlight how the alt-right has positioned dairy milk as a symbol for racial purity, thus connecting pseudo-scientific claims about milk, lactose tolerance, race,

and masculinity. The proliferation of the abusive term 'soy boy' to describe 'effeminate' 'politically correct' men, portrayed as weak and lacking in traditional markers of masculinity, rest heavily upon colonial-era stereotypes of so-called 'effeminate' plant-eating, which has links to Asian and other non-white cultures (Gambert and Linne, 2018).

### Harmful to the environment

The term 'anthropocene' has increasingly been used to describe the current geologic era, characterised by significant human impact on the earth's ecology and ecosystems (Holley and Shearing, 2017). Humans may be contributing to a new mass-extinction event (Milman, 2018). Ecocide has been defined as:

*'the extensive damage, destruction to, or loss of ecosystems of a given territory, whether by human agency or by other causes, to such an extent that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants of that territory has been severely diminished'* (Higgins, 2012: 3).

Environmentalists have called for ecocide to be the fifth international 'crime against peace' (alongside genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression) (Higgins, 2010). Animal industries contribute to ecocide in manifold ways.

The 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), reported that to keep to the goal of the temperature not increasing more than 1.5' Celsius, governments would have to slash emissions of greenhouse gases by 45% by 2030. Despite this, some world leaders engage in Climate Change denial and US President Trump withdrew from the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, which committed UN nations to address greenhouse gas emissions from 2020 onwards. We face an impending climate crisis, but political discussion in the UK has been completely dominated by Brexit and the UK's relationship with the European Union since 2016, and this looks set to continue.

Environmental concerns must not be separated from those of non-human animals, or indeed humans. Meat is a huge global industry. One billion animals are killed annually in British slaughterhouses alone (Viva! 2019), and this contributes to environmental harm in various ways. Animal industries also contribute significantly to climate change and other environmental damage (Grossi et al, 2019). Add to this, the inefficient use of crops and water required to feed animals, which could be used by humans, the use of fossil fuel in



animal industries (e.g. transporting livestock, refrigeration), deforestation for land-animal pasture, plus issues around animal methane (IPCC, 2019). In November 2017, 15,364 scientists signed a *Warning to Humanity*, calling for a drastic reduction in per capita consumption of fossil fuels, meat, and other resources, to prevent climate catastrophe (Ripple et al, 2017). A concerted switch to plant-based diets could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by two thirds, and would also result in various healthcare-related savings, as well as avoiding climate-related damage up to \$1.5 trillion (Springman et al, 2016).

## Implications for a Less Harmful Society

### *Academic Changes*

One way that academics can address both the issue of violence towards animals, and the related impending ecological catastrophe, is to ensure that Green Criminology and Critical Animal Studies become core features of the social science curriculum. This should be part of a wider process to revisit what we teach, and how we frame the subjects in which we have expertise, for example, the essential need to decolonise criminology curricula. Academics must also see the struggle for environmental and species justice as running parallel with struggles against the neo-liberalization and marketization of academia, particularly the exploitation of precarious workers. Academic workers in the UK might join the University and College Union (UCU) and support their more precariously employed colleagues, whilst also encouraging the union to recognise the interconnectedness of environmental struggle to other struggles central to our futures.

### *Legal and political changes*

The struggle for a world entirely free from animal exploitation may seem hopelessly idealistic, yet it is already illegal to hurt some animals in some contexts and it is already accepted that animals have some rights (Nurse, 2016). Academics, social scientists, and zemiological criminologists can and should exert their influence on policy and push for a world where these kinds of harms are less endemic. The exploitation involved in animal industries is an intrinsic aspect of the underlying logic of capitalism and so it is our duty to resist both as related systems. Prominent and powerful academics might follow figures like Angela Davis in throwing their weight behind animal rights and environmental causes (Vegan Society, 2019a). Whilst experts can exert influence that can lead to legal and political

changes, social change is perhaps the most important dimension through which harms to non-human animals can be reduced. Other proactive activities include support for animal rights, environmentalist activism and direct action, and resisting the damaging characterisation of these activists as ‘domestic extremists’ (Schlembach, 2018; NetPol, 2019).

### *Adopting and Promoting Veganism*

One practical action that could further advance society’s shift, from non-human animal products, is easing the adoption of veganism, either on an individual or institutional level. Institutional change helps to de-personalise and de-individualise discussions of veganism. Veganism as a set of rules, can seem rigid and static. In practice, individual adherence to veganism is invariably rooted in deeply personal and complex social and biographical dynamics (Stephens Griffin, 2017). Normalising veganism in specific contexts could help to disentangle and disrupt carnist hegemony. For example, academic conferences and departments could adopt a vegan catering policy, problematizing the assumed necessity for meat and dairy at meals. Goldsmiths University, in London, recently decided to stop the sale of Beef products, acknowledging the disproportionate impact of Beef on the environment (Walker, 2019).

Academic departments can play an important lead role in addressing the impending environmental catastrophe, and adopting sustainable vegan catering policies is one way to set an example. We would like to see academics pushing for change in their own institutions. Again, whilst universities are managed based on the pernicious neo-liberal logic of capital accumulation, these sorts of changes are less likely. The critical among us, vegan or otherwise, are working to disrupt this. If you are an academic, a head of department, a senior faculty member, use your influence to push for practices that normalise veganism at work and take meat off the menu.

Between 2006 and 2016, the number of vegans in the UK increased by 350% and veganism appears to be particularly popular among young people (Jones, 2018). An IpsosMorey’s survey found that there were 600,000 vegans in the UK in 2019 (Vegan Society, 2019b). According to Google Trends, people are four times more likely to search for veganism than vegetarianism or gluten free. In 2018, the UK launched more new vegan

products than any other nation globally (Mintel, 2019). Veganism is growing. However, adopting veganism without dismantling capitalist relations of production will simply reproduce the same old harmful systems of exploitation discussed (Torres, 2007). Veganism as a form of critical praxis works best in tandem with anti-capitalist, and other emancipatory struggles, and we must avoid divide-and-rule, zero-sum game politics, which pits causes against one another.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we have provided an overview of critical scholarship concerning violence against non-human animals, drawing together a range of ideas from the fields of green criminology and critical animal studies. In doing so, we hope to have helped establish the theoretical foundations of non-speciesist approaches to social harm. We argue that zemiology must account for, and explicitly reject, violence against non-human animals as socially harmful.

As many vegans are acutely aware, interpersonal debates around the lives (and deaths) of animals are often met with reactionary defensiveness. It is possible the toxicity of these debates has spilled onto the page. Assuming you have stuck with the chapter thus far, you may feel some discomfort, under 'attack' for eating meat. It feels unpleasant to be accused of malice or complicity in something harmful. But this feeling is significant. In arguing for the ontological reality that non-human animals are sentient and feel pain, and that violence against non-human animals harms them, and that this harm deserves serious consideration our aim is not to castigate meat-eaters, or pass moral judgement on individuals. No one is free from complicity in structures of oppression. Adherents to veganism also engage in harmful and oppressive systems under capitalism. Focussing on individual 'perfection' misses the point. Reducing what is essentially a structural, intersectional struggle, against diverse forms of oppression, to a moral judgement on an individual's behaviour reproduces the hyper-individualist logic of neo-liberal capitalism (Harvey, 2007). It is not about individuals; it is about the collective. Let us move beyond the bizarre hypotheticals (Q: "if you were stranded on a desert island, would you kill an animal to survive?" A: "possibly in desperation, but I'm more likely to kill you to end this conversation"). Let us not judge one another, but ask ourselves how we can do more to stop contributing to violence against human animals and non-human animals alike. Let us talk

about violence against non-human animals as if it matters, because it does, without seeking to engage in a zero-sum game of compassion where concern for one cause, precludes concern for another.

## Further Reading

- Carol Adams. 1990. *The sexual politics of meat*. New York: Continuum

This hugely influential text provides a feminist analysis of the links between patriarchy and animal abuse, arguing that feminist analysis logically contains a critique of human/animal relationships. The text illustrates how hierarchies of species, which nurture the oppression of other animals and allow meat consumption are interconnected with hierarchies of race, class and gender within patriarchal societies.

- Nocella, A., Sorenson, J., Socha, K. and Matsuoko, A. 2014. *Defining Critical Animal Studies: An Intersectional Social Justice Approach for Liberation*, New York: Peter Lang.

This edited volume collects a number of essays broadly united under the heading 'Critical Animal Studies'. It provides a very useful introduction to this diverse, interdisciplinary field, and includes chapters focusing on total liberation, the relationship between academia and activism, critical animal studies pedagogy, and more.

- Piers Bierne. 2018. *Murdering Animals: Writings on Theriocide, Homicide and Non-Speciesist Criminology*, London: Palgrave.

This text introduces the concept of 'theriocide' to describe the death of animals as a result of human actions. This new way of conceptualising harm to animals has had profound impact on enhancing interest in species justice within and beyond the discipline of criminology.

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