



# The War Against Nonhuman Animals

A Non-Speciesist Understanding  
of Gendered Reproductive Violence

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# 1

## Introduction: The War Against Nonhuman Animals

### Inspiration for Writing the Book

Dr. Melanie Joy's conversation about carnism on the Ezra Klein podcast in 2018 was the inspiration for writing this book. During her conversation with Ezra, Joy informs listeners that "...more farmed animals are slaughtered in one week than the total number of people killed in all wars throughout human history" (Klein, 2018). I had to stop and rewind the podcast. Had I misheard? Were these numbers correct? I was also interested in a broader question: how is the slaughter of nonhuman animals different from the violence(s) that take place during war and armed conflict?<sup>1</sup> Put another way: are there grounds for placing the slaughter of nonhuman animals in the context of war? It is worth stating at the outset: the position taken in this book is that the violence(s) committed by humans against nonhuman animals need to be understood within the framework of war. How I have arrived at this conclusion will be discussed

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<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere I have provided a useful distinction between the terms war and armed conflict. See the Introduction to Banwell (2020) *Gender the Violence(s) of War and Armed Conflict*. The open access version of the book can be accessed at <https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/doi/10.1108/9781787691155>.

in detail toward the end of this chapter. First, I want to briefly outline what the book is about, address some preliminary questions, and explain the terminology used in the book. The case studies chosen for analysis, the methodology, analytical framework, and the main arguments of the book, as well as its organization, will be presented at the end of the chapter.

This book reviews historical and contemporary examples of reproductive violence and reproductive coercion committed against human and nonhuman animals during war, armed conflict, and peacetime societies. The specific War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity (as listed in International Humanitarian Law and International Criminal Law)<sup>2</sup> include rape, forced pregnancy, and other acts of sexual violence committed against human and nonhuman populations.<sup>3</sup> The acts themselves, their aims, and their outcomes—all of which are discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 4—are framed as the expressions and consequences of reproductive and genocidal violence. The latter only applies to human populations.

## Setting the Scene

This section provides readers with the latest figures on the global slaughter of nonhuman animals. I debated whether to include this section. In researching this book, I found that most authors included this information and did so in creative ways. For example, Joy (writing in 2010) informs us that US “agribusinesses slaughter ten billion animals per year.” This figure, she explains, does not include approximately ten billion fish and sea animals that are also killed each year. “That’s 19,011 animals per minute, or 317 animals per second. In the time it took you

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<sup>2</sup> Given the focus of this book—and based on my revised definition of armed conflict—we will be focusing primarily on IHL rather than ICL, as the latter focuses on individual criminal responsibility, whereas in this book we address the role of actors within the animal-industrial complex at the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels.

<sup>3</sup> While the case studies in this book primarily address the experiences of cis gender populations, in Chapter 4 I suggest that we need to move beyond cis-gender bodies and address how reproductive violence is enacted against the following groups: persons capable of becoming pregnant—cis gender women and trans men; as well as persons capable of procreation through semen production—men and trans women.

to read these three paragraphs,” she continues, “...nearly 60,000 more animals were killed” (Joy, 2010, p. 37). Joy (2010) offers alternative ways to comprehend the scale of this violence. One of which is a thought experiment that asks us to imagine a line of ten billion people. The line, she says, “...would be two million miles long. That’s long enough to reach the moon and back, four times. It’s also long enough to wrap around the entire circumference of the earth eighty times” (p. 38). Two things are worth pointing out at this stage. These figures presented by Joy are based on the slaughter of nonhuman animals in the US alone. They are based on the numbers of nonhuman animals killed *each year*, in 2010. For obvious reasons, the cumulative scale of this violence—from 2010 to the present time, 2023—is missing from these figures.

Truthfully, I was not convinced of the value of providing such detailed statistical information. While I understood the importance of providing concrete or tangible evidence to support the arguments presented in this book, I worried that such an approach was counterproductive: would highlighting the sheer scale of the violence overwhelm readers? Would this have a similar effect as fears surrounding climate change in the form of eco-anxiety and climate anxiety which can leave people feeling disempowered and disengaged? However, given the central thesis of this book—that we are currently engaged in a war against nonhuman animals—I decided that it was important to record here the extent and nature of this violence.

At the time of writing (January 2023), the figures—for the period up to 2022—are broken down by Viva! as follows: in the UK 1.2 billion animals, almost 1 billion fish, and 4.4 billion shellfish are killed every year. In terms of the land animals discussed in this book: annually, 1.1 billion chickens, 10.9 million pigs, and 2.7 million cattle are slaughtered in the UK. Globally, 78.7 billion land animals are slaughtered for meat consumption every year, while trillions of fish and shellfish are also killed (Viva!).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed review of these figures, see Orzechowski (2022). *Global Animal Slaughter Statistics & Charts: 2022 Update*.

### Response to preliminary questions

I anticipate that some readers will be asking: *but don't (wild) animals kill and eat other animals? Isn't rape and sexual violence prevalent among animals? If animals can be victims, can they also be perpetrators?* And even if you have not thought about these questions right at this moment, you might at some future point while reading this book. Therefore, I will respond to these pre-emptive questions at the outset.<sup>5</sup>

### *But don't animals kill and eat other animals?*

Humans have a range of options available to them in terms of their diet and what they choose to consume. As Joy (2010, p. 30) explains in her book, *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows*, carnism is a belief system in the same way that vegetarianism and veganism are. Carnism is a normative belief system whereby eating animals is viewed as ethical and acceptable. It is considered the opposite of veganism. Joy (2010, p. 30) explains:

Carnists – people who eat meat - are not the same as carnivores. Carnivores are animals that are dependent on meat to survive. Carnists are not also merely omnivores. An omnivore is an animal – human and nonhuman – that has the psychological ability to ingest both plants and meat. But, like “carnivore”, “omnivore” is a term that describes one’s biological constitution, not one’s philosophical choice. Carnists eat meat not because they need to, but because they choose to, and choices always stem from beliefs.

My aim in pointing this out is to highlight the choices people make when they consume a meat-based diet. To argue that both human and nonhuman animals eat meat based on a biological, survival imperative does not consider the fact that, in general (although not always), when humans consume nonhuman animals, the decision is based, in part, on a *perceived* survival imperative. It is also rooted in a normative hierarchical judgment, which views the former as superior to the latter

<sup>5</sup> In response to questions about the killing and consuming of nonhuman animals for religious, cultural and survival purposes, for example, within Native and Indigenous populations, as well as the killing and ceremonial sacrifice of nonhuman animals, please see Deckha (2007) and Kim (2015) who tackle these thorny issues in a fluent and sensitive manner.

(Kochi, 2009). In addition, the nature of the killing across these species is radically different. Nibert (2013, p. 12) uses the term *domesecration* (as a replacement for the term domestication) to describe “...the systemic practice of violence in which social animals are enslaved and biologically manipulated, resulting in their objectification, subordination, and oppression.” This process, he explains, “violates the sanctity of life of the sentient being involved.” For Nibert (2013), this form of factory farming can be referred to as the animal-industrial complex.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, rape and reproductive violence (in the form of forced pregnancy) when committed by humans against nonhuman animals is a type of biopolitical violence (this is discussed below and in more detail in Chapter 5). This is not the case among nonhuman animals.<sup>7</sup>

***If animals can be victims, can they also be perpetrators?***

Despite the case made in this book—that we are currently engaged in a war against nonhuman animals—nonhuman animals are not currently considered legal victims of crime (Flynn & Hall, 2017).<sup>8</sup> Indeed, historically nonhuman animals were considered the perpetrators of crime and were put on trial for their ‘crimes’ (Beirne, 2018; Flynn & Hall, 2017).<sup>9</sup> Referring to the work of Evans (1906), Flynn and Hall (2017, p. 300) note that these ‘animal trials’ involved either groups of nonhuman

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<sup>6</sup> Noske (1997) coined this term to refer to the industrial domination and exploitation of nonhuman animals in capitalist societies. Factory farms are referred to as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations in the US and mega farms in the UK, Europe, and the rest of the world. These are discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>7</sup> Please see the edited collection by Muller and Wrangham (2009), titled *Sexual Coercion in Primates and Humans*. The chapters in the volume draw on empirical data to examine sexual coercion (the term used for this population) among primates and other nonhuman animals, with individual chapters highlighting the evolutionary basis to this violence. Based on the work presented, comparisons can be drawn between the use of sexual coercion among nonhuman animals and rape and sexual violence among humans.

<sup>8</sup> Please see Flynn and Hall’s (2017) article *The case for a Victimology of Nonhuman Animal Harms* where they put forward a compelling case for acknowledging the legal victimhood status of nonhuman animals.

<sup>9</sup> Beirne (2018) provides a detailed review of this subject matter in a chapter called ‘On the Geohistory of Justiciable Animals: Was Britain a Deviant Case’ in his book *Murdering Animals* written with O’Donnell and Janssen.

animals, such as rodents, who had compromised crops or individual nonhuman animals, such as dogs, pigs, and cows, who stood trial for crimes such as theft, murder, and infanticide. They note that these trials no longer take place and that “nonhuman animals are not seen to possess the moral agency to be criminally culpable” (p. 300).

In the same way that infants and young children (those under 10 in the UK, for example) are not held criminally responsible, but are recognized as victims of crime, I believe we can apply the same principle to nonhuman animals. As will be discussed below, in relation to the notion of ‘animal soldiers,’ determining the agency and criminal responsibility of nonhuman animals is more contentious than proving they are sentient beings who have an interest and right not to be harmed. Indeed, making the case that nonhuman animals can suffer and feel pain, and therefore have a right *not* to experience such pain and suffering, is not the same as claiming nonhuman animals should have identical rights to humans. And to take this further, I do not believe nonhuman animals have the capacity to vote, but nor do they have the capacity to make moral decisions or engage in criminal acts. This does not negate their ability to feel pain and to be victims of various acts of violence. Motivation and context are key when discussing nonhuman animals who kill and eat other species of nonhuman animals. To reiterate, when nonhuman animals kill each other for food, this is based on a survival imperative. This is not biopolitical or sovereign violence (discussed below). It does not involve domesecration and the violence does not take place within the animal-industrial complex.

And finally, this is not so much a question as it is an assertion: “*but we have been killing and eating nonhuman animals for centuries*” (Joy, 2010, p. 107). I will defer to Joy who responds to this statement with the following: while it is “true that we have been eating meat...for at least two million years...infanticide, murder, rape and cannibalism are at least as old as meat eating— and yet we don’t invoke the history of these acts as a justification for them” (Joy, 2010, p. 107).

## The Terminology Used in the Book

The question of what terminology we should use when referring to animals is a contentious one (see Bourke, 2020; Nibert, 2013; Sollund, 2017; Twine, 2013). Not least, because, as I see it, the language we adopt has the dual task of both exposing *and* challenging normative hierarchical distinctions that are embedded within current discourses on human and nonhuman animals.<sup>10</sup> As Carol Adams contends, society “...institutionalize[s] the oppression of animals on at least two levels: in formal structures such as slaughterhouses, meat markets, zoos, laboratories, and circuses, and through our language” (Adams, 2015, p. 48). She goes further and argues that “[n]ot only is our language male-centred, it is human-centred as well” (p. 45).

The ongoing debates within the literature (both within and outside Critical Animal Studies), on how best to challenge anthropocentric discursive representations of nonhuman animals, are testament to the difficulties inherent in developing a non-speciesist language.<sup>11</sup> For some, the short-term solution is to use single and/or double quotation marks around terms such as animals, humans, and livestock (Bourke, 2020; Nibert, 2013; Twine, 2013). As Twine (2013, p. 78) explains, with reference to the term ‘livestock,’ the use of quotation marks is twofold: it both challenges the naturalization of the commodification of nonhuman animals and provides a distance from the normative assumptions embedded within the term. Both Bourke and Twine acknowledge that these are tentative resolutions, and ultimately, Twine (2013, p. 78) concedes, “the discourse and binary of ‘human’ and ‘animal’ must be challenged in more satisfactory ways.”

Throughout this book, I will use the term nonhuman animals to distinguish between animals and humans. For Beirne (2018, p. 10), the use of this term falls into the “clutches of speciesism.” He believes that the use of terms such as “nonhuman” or “other than human” forces

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<sup>10</sup> The ‘we’ I am referring to here does not simply refer to animal rights advocates. My hope is that this ‘we’ would encompass a wider community—a cross-section of society who will challenge human exceptionalism and recognize that nonhuman animals are sentient beings who suffer and feel pain.

<sup>11</sup> See Bourke (2011) for a discussion of the legal definitions of animals.

us “...to use humans as a yardstick.” He argues that “[t]o speak of ‘nonhuman animals,’ for example, involves the same sort of mistake as if we were to describe human females as nonmale humans” (p. 10). I disagree with Beirne’s comments about the term nonhuman animals. That said, the phrase “Other than humans” (Flynn & Hall, 2017) or “[O]ther than homo sapiens” (Ko & Ko, 2015/2020, p. 21) does not sit well with me either. The term ‘Other than’ typically translates as ‘less-than’ or ‘inferior.’ It reifies human as normative. I think it is important to acknowledge that animals are not humans while at the same time addressing the fact that humans are in indeed animals. I believe this is captured in the phrase *nonhuman animals*: it simultaneously captures what animals are—*nonhuman*—while also confirming what humans are: *human animals*. As I will demonstrate in this book, the phrase nonhuman does not have to carry negative connotations. It can be used to celebrate and accentuate difference, rather than imposing a hierarchical distinction.

A discussion about how we should refer to nonhuman animals leads, in my mind, inexorably to a discussion about the meaning of the term *human*; what it means to be human and who is classified as human. Throughout this book as part of our examination of the war against nonhuman animals—and the argument that they should be granted legal personhood—we will also interrogate what it means to be human. The concepts of intersectionality and posthumanism will facilitate this discussion. This will be done in the following chapter.

## The Violence(s) Discussed in This Book

I use the term violence(s) to acknowledge the multiple and diverse types of violence that are committed during war and armed conflict. The various types of violence reviewed in this book are listed under War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity. War Crimes—listed in International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Criminal Law (ICL)—include rape, forced pregnancy, and “*any other form of sexual violence also constituting a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions*” [emphasis added] (see element b of Article 8 of the Rome Statue of the

International Criminal Court, 1998, p. 8). Crimes against Humanity refer to a range of acts that are committed “as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack.” This includes, but is not limited to “rape, forced pregnancy... *or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity*” [emphasis added] (see Element g of Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 1998, p. 4).

## Reproductive Violence and Reproductive Coercion

Our main focus throughout is on the nature and consequences of reproductive violence. Reproductive violence is a term coined by Grey (2017). It refers to violence that violates a person’s reproductive autonomy or violence that is directed against an individual due to their reproductive capabilities. Examples include forced impregnation, forced pregnancy, forced miscarriage, forced sterilization, and forced abortion. In the chapters that follow, we will review examples of reproductive violence committed against human and nonhuman populations. In some cases of intrahuman violence, these acts are genocidal in nature. Reproductive coercion can include “pressure...to become pregnant (pregnancy coercion),” “...interference with contraception (birth control sabotage),” and “threats related to pregnancy continuation or termination (control of pregnancy outcomes).” It is regarded as a type of intimate partner violence (Miller & Silverman, 2010, p. 512 as cited in McGirr et al., 2020, p. 2083). I will demonstrate that this type of violence is not limited to intimate partner violence, rather, as the case studies of this book will highlight, this type of violence is committed by the state (as was the case during the Nazi genocide and the 1971 Liberation War in Bangladesh) and by humans against nonhuman animals.

## The 'Dreaded Comparisons:' Atrocity and Slavery Analogies

At this stage, I believe it is important to address head on any potential concerns readers might have with a book that chooses to address reproductive violence committed against human and nonhuman animals. I want to reassure readers from the outset that my intention is not to draw crude comparisons across the case studies chosen for analysis. Put simply, this book does not engage in a direct comparison between human and nonhuman animals. Rather, it argues that, in the context of the war against nonhuman animals, as civilians, nonhuman animals should have access to protections included in IHL, specifically War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity. By way of illustration, the next section reviews the literature on 'dreaded comparisons' and the use of analogies within Critical Animal Studies and the animal rights movement more broadly. The examples I explore are atrocity analogies, slavery analogies and comparisons between violence against women and violence against nonhuman animals. The section ends with some suggestions on how we move forward.

In 1988, Marjorie Spiegel published *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery*.<sup>12</sup> In it, as the title suggests, she draws parallels between the oppression of black people and the oppression of nonhuman animals. As Judith Hampson wrote in her review of the book in 1990: "[t]he thesis is not that the oppressions experienced by black people and animals have taken *identical forms*, the cases are very different, but the claim is that they have some things in common" [emphasis added]. (See also Ko & Ko, 2015/2020 who make a similar argument based on their black vegan activism.) A number of scholars, writers, and members of the animal rights movement move beyond simply highlighting common sources of oppression among human and nonhuman animals. Indeed some have used Holocaust analogies to highlight the violence and suffering of nonhuman animals. The earliest of these are the writings of Polish-born Jewish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer. Singer won the Nobel Prize for literature for his fictional accounts of Jewish life

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<sup>12</sup> The book has been expanded and revised since its original publication in 1988.

in Poland and the US. In his work, Singer drew comparisons between the treatment of nonhuman animals and the treatment of Jews during the Holocaust (see Kim, 2011). Other more recent publications include *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust* (Patterson, 2002) and *The Holocaust and the Henmaid's Tale: A Case for Comparing Atrocities* (Davis, 2005).

In *Eternal Treblinka*, Patterson (2002) argues that there are links between animal cruelty and genocide. He states: “[o]nce animal exploitation was institutionalized...it opened the door to similar ways of treating other human beings, thus paving the way for such atrocities as human slavery and the Holocaust” (Patterson, 2002, p. 12). And in *The Holocaust and the Henmaid's Tale*, Davis (2005), founder and president of United Poultry Concerns, draws parallels between the forced labor of the concentration camps during the Holocaust and the forced labor of chickens on factory farms (Hawthorne, 2006). The book by Davis (2005) was inspired by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and their 2003 exhibit: *The Holocaust on Your Plate*. This installation—which included images of caged and deceased nonhuman animals alongside images of dead and confined bodies in the Nazi concentration camps—traveled across 70 US cities and 20 countries between 2003 and 2005 (Hawthorne, 2006; Kim, 2011). The text that accompanied these images read: “[d]uring the seven years between 1938 and 1945, 12 million people perished in the Holocaust. The same number of animals is killed EVERY 4 HOURS for food in the [US] alone” (as cited in Kim, 2011, p. 311). This and their second exhibit, *Animal Liberation Project: We Are All Animals*, are discussed at length by Kim (2011) in her article *Moral Extensionism or Racist Exploitation? The Use of Holocaust and Slavery Analogies in the Animal Liberation Movement*.

Many condemned PETA's first installation, *The Holocaust on Your Plate*. The news media featured articles denouncing the tactics used by the organization. For example, in an article in *The Guardian* titled, ‘Holocaust on a plate angers US Jews,’ Abraham Foxman, the national director of the *Anti-Defamation League* and a Holocaust survivor, agreed that the “abuse of animals should be opposed”; however, he described “the effort by [PETA] to compare the deliberate systematic murder of millions of Jews to the issue of animal rights [as] abhorrent” (see Teather,

2003). Another news article included the response from the chairman of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum who described the stunt as “a desecration of Holocaust memory” (see Kim, 2011, p. 312). And in the UK, Manchester City Council banned the exhibition (PETA UK, 2014). Similarly, many condemned their second installation *Animal Liberation Project* describing it as “racist, offensive and outrageous” (Kim, 2015, p. 283). This leads us on to our discussion of the use of slavery analogies to highlight the suffering of nonhuman animals.

## Slavery

There are two components to the discussion of human slavery and factory farming. The first focuses on the animalization of black slaves and their classification as sub- or not-quite human. Within this element, the emphasis is on the human slave who has been reduced to the status of the animal. The second involves comparing the exploitation and commodification of nonhuman animals with the treatment of slaves. Both elements are captured in the following passages:

...with animals...defined as ‘lower life’ fated for exploitation and slaughter, the designation of ‘lesser’ humans as animals paved the way for their subjugation and destruction. (Patterson, 2002, p. 26)

In slave societies, the same practices used to control animals were used to control slaves – castration, branding, whipping, chaining, ear cropping. (Patterson, 2002, p. 14)

The use of slavery analogies by animal rights campaigners was common in the early nineteenth century (Wrenn, 2014). Parallels were drawn between the property status and institutional economic exploitation of both slaves and nonhuman animals (Kim, 2011). As Kim (2011, p. 314) points out, given the comparison between slaves and nonhuman animals these analogies were not regarded as controversial. We can contrast this with PETA’s 2005 second traveling exhibit *Animal Liberation Project* (mentioned above). This exhibit compared images of nonhuman animals in factory farms and circuses with “the violence done to marginalized

human others (slaves, lynching victims, subjects of the Tuskegee syphilis experiments, dis-placed Native Americans, force-fed suffragettes, and more) throughout [US]” (Kim, 2015, p. 283). Like *The Holocaust on your Plate* before it, this installation received widespread condemnation (see Kim, 2011 for a more in-depth discussion of this). We will return to the themes of racism and animalization in Chapters 2 and 3 as part of our discussion on posthumanism and dehumanization.

## Violence Against Women

Finally, I want to consider the comparisons that are drawn between the treatment of women and the treatment of nonhuman animals. For many, the exploitation of nonhuman animals is a feminist issue (see Brown, 2016; Cusack, 2013). Feminists have drawn attention “to the way in which being a woman was conflated with being a female farmed animal” (Kelty-Huber, 2015, pp. 12–13. See also Adams, 2015; Allcorn & Ogletree, 2018; Brown, 2016; Cusack, 2013; Twine, 2010). In her article, *A Feminist Analysis of Animal and Human Oppression: Intersectionality Among Species*, Brown (2016) argues that the interchangeable language used to describe women and nonhuman animals is degrading and maintains women’s subordinate position. In the article, she draws comparisons between the experiences of dairy cows and the treatment of black female slaves, arguing that the reproductive and dairy-producing bodies of both have been exploited. Others base their comparisons on the historical property status of women with the current property status of nonhuman animals, drawing parallels between animal husbandry<sup>13</sup> and heterosexual marriage (see Kelty-Huber, 2015).

Broadly speaking, this work can be situated within ecofeminist philosophy, which, among other things, concerns itself with addressing the commodification, exploitation, and degradation of women and nonhuman animals within patriarchal societies (Allcorn & Ogletree, 2018; Kelty-Huber, 2015; Narayanan, 2019; Twine, 2013). As Cusack

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<sup>13</sup> Common definitions of the term animal husbandry include: the management and care of domesticated animals; the science of breeding farm animals; a branch of agriculture involved in the production of farm animals. We will interrogate this in more detail in Chapter 3.

(2013, p. 24) explains: “ecofeminism attempts to relate the exploitation and suffering of animals and women, while calling attention to the patriarchal attitudes embodied by the abuse of animals.” Added to this, ecofeminists challenge essentialist notions of women and nature and engage in an intersectional analysis of the term ‘woman’ and ‘nature’ (Kelty-Huber, 2015; Twine, 2010). This leads some to use the phrase ‘rape of the land’ to metaphorically describe the destruction of the earth (Cusack, 2013). Here, the goal is to draw attention to the interconnections between the exploitation of humans, nonhuman animals and the earth, while at the same time highlighting the perpetrator of these crimes. “Though the victims may change,” Cusack (2013, p. 33) argues, “the general infliction of domination by the ‘rapist’ remains constant between the metaphorical and the literal female and across species of female animals.”

It is worth noting that not all of this work engages in crude comparisons between women and nonhuman animals. Wyckoff (2014), for example, puts forward the *Linked Oppression Thesis* which focuses on the shared *sources* of oppression between women and nonhuman animals rather than conflating their experiences. Within this thesis, the shared sources of oppression include capitalism, patriarchy, and hegemonic masculinity (Allcorn & Ogletree, 2018). In a similar vein, Carol Adams (2015, p. 27), in her ground-breaking book, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, proposes “a cycle of objectification, fragmentation, and consumption, which links butchering and sexual violence in our culture.” She goes on to explain: “objectification permits an oppressor to view another being as an object. The oppressor then violates this being by object-like treatment.” According to Adams’ analysis, the shared *foundation* of this objectification, fragmentation, and consumption is patriarchal society that treats women and nonhuman animals both as objects rather than subjects.

And finally, Twine (2010, p. 400) reminds us, when referring to the work of Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan, for example, that “the agenda of ecofeminists...in juxtaposing ‘animals’ and ‘women’ is not the debasement of women but the explication of relations of power that

intersect gender and species.”<sup>14</sup> Here, following Kelty-Huber (2015), we can draw on Kheel (2008, p. 208 as cited in Kelty-Huber, 2015, p. 7) who describes intersectional ecofeminist scholars as those “who focus on the parallel situations of ‘women’ and ‘nature’ to an emphasis on the *shared* ideologies that support multiple forms of domination, including those based on race, class, age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation” [emphasis added].

## Moving Forward with a ‘Multi-Optic’ Vision

My purpose in drawing attention to these analogies is to underscore that this book does not fall within this trend. While it does include the experiences of both human and nonhuman animals, it does not engage in a direct, hierarchical comparison between these groups. Rather, this book can be aligned with the work of those who seek to highlight the similarities in the shared *sources* of oppression. The book will also demonstrate how nonhuman animals meet the necessary criteria within IHL to be protected from the violence(s) of war.

That said, given the controversial nature of these *dreaded comparisons* and the continued use/defense of such analogies, in this final section I want to think about how we can move beyond divisive and alienating tactics. I want to explore avenues that allow us to acknowledge the similarities that stem from the *source* of the oppression, while simultaneously respecting the distinct and unique experiences of the different groups experiencing such oppression. Because, as this book will demonstrate, humans and nonhuman animals alike have, and continue to be, oppressed, exploited, and denied basic rights vis-à-vis their personhood status.

A good starting point would be to adopt Kim’s (2015) notion of a ‘multi-optic’ vision. This, as she explains, is “... a way of seeing that takes

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<sup>14</sup> Here, Twine is referring to the book by Adams and Donovan (1995), *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, and the disgusted response he received from a feminist colleague when she saw him carrying the book. He attributes the response of his colleague to the book’s provocative title.

disparate justice claims seriously without privileging any one presumptively” (p. 19). In contrast to a *single-optic vision*—which focuses on one form of injustice while obscuring others—a “multi-optic” vision moves us closer to an “ethics of mutual avowal” (Kim, 2015, p. 20). The aim is to embrace the existence of multiple forms of oppression and the interconnectedness between them. An *ethics of mutual avowal* can be contrasted with the process of disavowal. The latter involves closing off or moving away, while the former is based on recognition and turning toward (Kim, 2015. See also Deckha 2007 and her discussion of bell hooks and her radical openness of mind). This book is an example of what can be achieved when we employ a ‘multi-optic’ vision. First, by addressing War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity carried out against human and nonhuman populations, it engages with multiple forms of oppression. Second, it highlights the shared foundation of the reproductive violence(s) committed against these populations.

Allied to this is the writing and digital activism of black vegan feminists Aph and Syl Ko. Their book, *Aphro-ism: Essays on Pop Culture, Feminism, and Black Veganism from Two Sisters*, challenges compartmentalized approaches to studying and combating oppression, specifically racism and speciesism. Through a series of blog posts, they offer a ‘new conceptual architecture’ for understanding the interconnections between these phenomena. For these sisters, combating racism requires addressing the oppression of nonhuman animals. In the words of Ko and Ko (2015/2020, p. 45): “[w]e think that something crucial has been missing from discussions about racism and from *almost all strategies* to resist or combat racism: the situation of animals.” Under white supremacy, Syl Ko explains, “the animal’ is regarded as sub and inhuman.” In turn, racism is premised on the notion of animality; therefore, as Aph and Syl Ko argue, ending racism requires challenging the status of the ‘the animal.’ These anti-racism and anti-speciesism projects involve reappraising the category human as a means of revaluing the nonhuman animal (Ko & Ko, 2015/2020). This can be achieved through decolonization. In her instruction on decolonization, Syl Ko is working on the understanding that we are decolonizing coloniality *the knowledge system*, rather than the literal colonial encounter. Decolonization in this context is not simply about including hitherto marginalized groups, it is about

dismantling the system of power on which this exclusion is premised. It requires “undoing humanity as we know it” (Ko & Ko, 2015/2020, p. 116). Syl Ko draws on Jackson (2013 as cited in Ko & Ko, 2015/2020, pp. 116–117) to explain this in more detail:

It is not that [racialized] critics [of posthumanism] simply sought admission into the normative category of ‘the human;’ rather, they attempted to transform the category from within...The hope was not that black people would gain admittance into the fraternity of Man - the aim was to displace the order of Man altogether. Thus, what they aspired to achieve was not the extension of...humanism to those enslaved and colonized, but rather a transformation within humanism.

As we will see, the ambition is not extensionist. We have to challenge binary and hierarchical distinctions between humans and nonhumans. Indeed, the “Eurocentric creation of ‘the human’ ...and ‘the animal’” (Ko & Ko, 2015/2020, p. 117) emerges from the colonial project. Decolonization in this instance involves challenging the objectification, exploitation, and destruction of those rendered sub-, non- and inhuman (Ko & Ko, 2015/2020). It involves challenging human exceptionalism. This can be achieved by a radical undoing of racism, sexism, hetero- and anthropatriarchy (the latter is defined below), as well as speciesism which, among other factors, inform the violence(s) discussed in this book.

Drawing on the work discussed above, the chapters in this book offer ideas on how to combat these forms of oppression. Now that we have established the terminology that will be used throughout, and I have outlined the intention of the book, let us now turn to the underlying argument of this book: the war against nonhuman animals.

## The War Against Nonhuman Animals

As noted above, to combat the violence(s) of war, the sources of such violence must be addressed. In the words of Nocella (2015, p. 133): “[t]o truly be against war, one must also be actively against [w]hite supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism and similar exploitative economic

systems, normalcy, and speciesism.” The topics of white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism (discussed in relation to racism, sexism, and speciesism) will be addressed throughout this book. For now, let us focus on following part of the statement: “to truly be against war, one must be actively against speciesism.”<sup>15</sup>

In September 2021 the US withdrew its military forces in Afghanistan, thus marking the end of the war in Afghanistan. The social and political landscape (in the form of social media posts, newspaper articles, and late-night TV and radio talk shows) was dominated by stories outlining the failings of the US government and the human tragedy following the end of the conflict. Here, I want to focus on the debate surrounding *Operation Ark*—the rescue mission to evacuate nonhuman animals from Afghanistan following the withdrawal of US armed forces. Pen Farthing, the founder of an animal shelter in Kabul, was behind the campaign to have his staff, their family members, and a total of 200 dogs and cats evacuated from Afghanistan. In her article, *Saving Pets Before People... Have We Gone Snarling Mad?*, Charlotte Ivers explains that she felt part of her brain had melted after listening to callers discuss this topic on Tom Swarbrick’s late-night show on LBC.<sup>16</sup> Ivers writes in her piece:

Caller after caller declared that the animals should be saved even if that meant diverting resources away from rescuing people. I listened in astonishment. One thing I had always presumed that everyone could agree on was that a human life is worth more than an animal life. How wrong I was.

Not everyone shared this view. Newkey-Burden (2021), writing in *The Independent*, responded by stating: “[d]ogs and cats are sentient beings. They will already be feeling the trauma of what’s going on in Afghanistan and if they are not allowed to leave with Farthing and his team, they will almost certainly die.”

The framing of *Operation ark* reminded me of a similar discussion that unfolded on an American HBO late-night TV show—*Last Week*

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<sup>15</sup> In simple terms, speciesism is the belief in human superiority over nonhuman animals.

<sup>16</sup> LBC is a British phone-in talk show radio station.

*Tonight* with John Oliver. ‘Prison Heat’ was the title of the episode that aired on June 14, 2021. In the episode, John Oliver discusses the lack of air conditioning in prisons in the US and the impact this has on the physical and mental well-being of prisoners. Many may argue, as Oliver is quick to point out, that criminals should not be comfortable in prison. However, for Oliver, these are human beings who he argues “deserve humane treatment regardless of what they did.” During the episode, we learn that US prisons have spent \$700,000 dollars on new climate-controlled housing facilities. These facilities are not for prisoners but are for prison in-house pig farms. Oliver reassures us that he has nothing “against pigs getting treated comfortably.” He loves pigs. Pigs, he explains, “are like big chubby dogs you can eat at Christmas. He just questions “prioritizing their comfort over humans.”

As discussed above, this book avoids this type of hierarchical comparative analysis. Instead, it employs a ‘multi-optic’ lens which allows us to see and empathize with multiple forms of oppression simultaneously, without comparing or privileging one over the other.

Nonhuman animals die in wars waged by humans. In this sense, one might argue that they are collateral damage. However, as Nocella (2015) argues, nonhuman animals are also “the casualties of an unspoken and unseen war that humans wage, and are winning, against nonhuman animals” (p. 129). Before we unpack the war against nonhuman animals in more detail, it is worth noting that existing research on the relationship between nonhuman animals and war has focused on the following issues: the use of nonhuman animals as vehicles to transport weapons and humans (Sorenson, 2015); the use of nonhuman animals as test subjects to test weapons and train humans to be violent (Goodman et al., 2015; Roscini, 2017); the exploitation and use of nonhuman animals as weapons (Morrón, 2015); the killing of nonhuman animals during war (Itoh, 2010); and finally, the aftermath and impact of war on nonhuman animals (Andrzejewski, 2015).

## Wadiwel (2015) *The War Against Animals*

I am not the first person (and hopefully will not be the last) to acknowledge that we are engaged in a war against nonhuman animals. In his book, *The War against Animals* (2015), Dinesh Wadiwel makes a compelling and convincing case for this argument (see also Wadiwel, 2009). Drawing on his work and Kochi's (2009) notion of *Species War*, this book offers a unique perspective on this proposition. I will review this work before outlining my own thesis on the war against nonhuman animals.

We will start with the following from Wadiwel (2015, pp. 5–6):

The scale by which we kill and harm animals would seem to confirm that our mainstay relationship with animals is combative or at least focused upon producing harm and death. Factory farming and industrialized slaughter technologies...enable a monstrous deployment of violence and extermination.

The argument Wadiwel (2009, 2015) advances is that the war against nonhuman animals is biopolitical in nature. In other words, it is a war about life *and* death. Relevant to my discussion of reproductive violence is the notion that the reproductive bodies of nonhuman animals are “central to the biopolitics of the whole [animal-industrial] complex, since large scale killing requires equally [large-scale] breeding” (Wadiwel, 2015, p. 15). I will return to this shortly. Wadiwel (2015) identifies three types of violence within the “totality of our war against animals” (p. 35). These are: *inter-subjective* (individual acts of violence against nonhuman animals), *institutional*, and *epistemic*. Below, I will address institutional violence (biopolitical and sovereign violence) and epistemic violence in more detail.

### Institutional Violence

In the book, *On War*, written by the military theorist Carl von Clausewitz, war is described as “an act of violence to compel our opponent