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Anarchism, Feminism and Veganism

A Convergence of Struggles

Ophélie Véron and Richard J. White

"We can no longer accept the decaying, hideous, and archaic geographies of hierarchy that chain us to statism, capitalism, gender domination, heteronormativity, radical oppression, speciesism, and imperialism." (Springer, 2016, 3)

Introduction

Compared alongside other dissident and radical movements, anarchism, not least by virtue of its unconditional commitment to identifying, resisting, challenging and transgressing multiple sites of oppression and their associated "multivariate apparatuses of domination" (Springer, 2016, 46) stands alone. In this way, by refusing to rarefy and privilege any *one* source of dominatory power anarchist praxis has been "highly open to intersectionality, if not already characterized by it" (Cudworth, 2015, 93). Importantly, this commitment has encouraged anarchists to critically reflect on how questions of emancipation, freedom and autonomy readily transgresses the boundaries of human society, and are intimately bound to concerns that extend toward non-human and more-than-human worlds (Hall, 2011). In the context of political ecology generally, and the body of theoretical- and empirically-driven research that informs this chapter more specifically, there are many rich veins to be tapped into within the existing body of anarchist praxis. A strong emphasis on questions of inter-species social justice and liberation, for example, animated some of the most brilliant contributions by key anarchist geographers including Elisée Reclus (1877, 1901) and Peter Kropotkin (1902). More recently, Bookchin (2015, 39) considered that: "perhaps the most fundamental message that social ecology advances is that the very idea of dominating nature stems from the domination of human by human", and Pepper (2002), through his work on Eco-Socialism (1993) suggested how anarchism and deep ecology can be synthesized as part of a radical green politics. Here, and other contributions notwithstanding there is still much more to that needs to be said, and urgently so, that speaks to the crises that all life faces in the midst of the anthropocene (White et. al, 2016).

In this context, of advancing an anarchist political ecology in important directions, the chapter argues that there are two powerful manifestations of oppression, namely *patriarchy* (the institutionalized domination of men over women) and *anthroparchy* (the human exploitation of other species, in particular nonhuman animals) where an intersectional anarchist praxis has been largely conspicuous only by its absence. In these intersections anarchists have only recently, particularly through *anarcha-feminist*, *veganarchist* and critical academic-activism more generally forged within both critical animal studies (e.g. Nocella et al. 2014; Nocella et al. 2015; Matsuoka and Sorenson, 2018) and critical animal geographies (see Gillespie and Collard, 2015; White, 2015; White and Springer, 2018), begun to address this considerable oversight.

The timeliness of realizing this potential cannot be underestimated, not least as the horrifying abuse and exploitation of other animals continues to escalate. Focusing on farmed animals alone, Nibert (2017, xi) notes:

more than 65 billion land-based beings are killed to be consumed as food every year, while the water-based other animals killed for food number in the hundreds of billions. The physical and emotional suffering from such horrific treatment experienced by each individual being, multiplied by the billions of individual animals who undergo it, results in a degree of severe distress and pain—every second—that defies comprehension".

In the face of such appalling injustice one would assume that anarchists, and feminists, would be at the forefront of merging trans-species narratives of social and spatial justice. Yet, troubling, and depressing in equal measure, this has yet to take place, and arguments which have advocated for a radical anarcho-feminist and/or vegananarchist praxis (e.g. White and Cudworth, 2014) have been met with overt hostility from within anarchist movement (e.g. Gelderloos, 2011). We find it remarkable, how otherwise critically reflexive anarchists are unwilling to acknowledge their own speciesist privileges, and continue to invest great energies to close down constructive dialogue, either through engaging in a politics of denial and avoidance, and/or being overtly hostile toward the very notion of inter-species expression of justice and solidarity. To acknowledge and constructively address this in a chapter which, hopefully, will attract a broader spectrum of anarchist readers, we feel is incredibly desirable and important. In this context, the chapter provocatively calls into question the nature of the emancipatory grounds upon which anarchists and anarchism stand upon. Where *choice* exists (and therefore questions of ethics and ethical praxis come into consideration) is it possible in any meaningful sense:

- To be an anarchist who maintains a deep commitment to fighting against both patriarchal and paternalistic forms of social domination *while* actively supporting forms of anthroparchy (e.g. the consumption of non-human animal corpses (meat) and dairy and eggs ("feminized protein" (Adams, 2015)?
- To be feminist or anti-speciesist that is committed to fighting against sexist and speciesist forms of social domination while acting in ways that upholds statist and capitalist forms of exploitation and domination?

If it is *not* possible then, where it continues to be upheld, how is the radical promise of anarchism (or feminism) blunted and diminished as a consequence? For those who maintain this internal inconsistency, how might recognizing these intersectional blind spots inspire new radical lines of flight into being: and empower anarchists to engage more purposefully and urgently at this time of unprecedented crises. A critical visibility around interrogating the critical intersections between anarchism, veganism, and feminism necessarily evokes strong synergies with political ecology/ies. Perhaps one of the most significant illustrations of this is an ongoing desire to envisage, and enact a deep care-based ethics that extends toward all life. Thus for anarchism to succeed in encouraging a radical spirit of care and justice into the world, as Reclus so beautifully articulated, it must recognize that this vision rests on ecological premises. Moreover, as John Clark (201, 21) argued: "Far from being anthropocentric, Reclus' view of humanity's place in nature is dialectical, critical holistic and developmental."

Similarly, feminists have contributed greatly to agitate and propel political ecology toward new domains. Feminist scholarship and activism (not least through advocating for veganism) over the last forty or so years have repeatedly foreground an ethics of care into the question of animal rights and liberation. As Seager (2003, 172) argues an:

insistence on contextualizing the caring for animals within a political analysis brings animal rights into synergy with political ecology, the point of entry for most feminist geographical work in this field.

In making the connection between the exploitation of humans and non-human animals, vegan ecofeminists such as Carol A. Adams and Marti Kheel have extended the scope of feminist political ecology. By examining the historical relations between the domestication of animals and the emergence of patriarchy and slavery, they have argued that the killing of any animal – whether human or not – is part of a larger system of oppression that should be ended:

In countless ways, the exploitation of animals rebounds to create crises within the human world itself. The vicious circle of violence and destruction can end only if and when the human species learns to form harmonious relations ‘non-hierarchical and nonexploitative’ with other animal species and the natural world. Human, animal, and earth liberation are interrelated projects that must be fought for as one (Best, 2006: 2).

Before continuing, it is timely to offer a fuller outline of what is understood by vegan(ism) and feminism in the context of this chapter.

Definitions

Just as there were thousands of years of social forms of organization which would be consistent with anarchism and anarchist praxis before Proudhon declared himself to be "an anarchist", so too were there many individuals who would be considered "vegan" before the term itself was coined in 1944 with the birth of the Vegan Society in England. One of these individuals, almost certainly, would have been the brilliant French anarchist geographer, Élisée Reclus, who spoke of vegetarianism (1901), but who lived according to what we would consider a vegan anarchist praxis (White and Cudworth, 2014). The coining of the word 'vegan' by Donald Watson and others in 1944, and the definition veganism used by The Vegan Society from 1979 is still - arguably - the most accessible, and influential today:

A philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude—as far as is possible and practicable—all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals and the environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals.¹

This notwithstanding, we would like to acknowledge a lesser-referenced definition of veganism, one proposed by Eva Batt in 1964, which would appear highly attuned to an anarchist sensibility around prefigurative praxis (and resisting religious overtures!):

¹Source : <https://www.vegansociety.com/go-vegan/definition-veganism> [accessed 17/12/2017]

(V)eganism has no connection with any political party or system, national or international. Similarly, individual vegans may be deeply religious, perhaps devout Christians or disciples of one of many other faiths and creeds in this world, but this is not a requisite of veganism, which is an everyday, fundamental way of life concerned with living without hurting others. The hereafter may, or may not, solve all our problems; but what we do now certainly affects all those around us. (no date)

It is important to note that both definitions explicitly extend the concept of veganism beyond being merely a 'food' or 'lifestyle' choice (Watkinson and O'Driscoll. 2014). Rather, *according to its original use* veganism - *to be* vegan as envisaged by Watson - demanded an explicit ethical commitment to end animal exploitation *and* an intersectional praxis that benefitted humans, other animals, and the environment.

While it is relatively unproblematic to cite a broadly consensual definition of veganism, the same cannot be said of feminism. Each definition of feminism is informed by specific political perspectives and values, and there are probably as many definitions of feminism as there are different feminist movements. We will refer, in the first instance, to the definition proposed by Wikipedia, which characterises feminism as:

(A) range of political movements, ideologies, and social movements that share a common goal: to define, establish, and achieve political, economic, personal, and social equality of sexes.²

Feminist movements have campaigned and continue to campaign for women's rights, including the right to vote, to hold public office, to work, to earn fair wages or equal pay, to own property, to receive education, to enter contracts, to have equal rights within marriage, and to have maternity leave.

Many reflections can be held against this definition, and examples given, but we shall restrict our opening analysis to three main points. First, it is an egalitarian definition. The idea here is to ensure that women and men are equal, without further consideration for the wider structures in which they evolve – which may still be hierarchized and divided in classes, races and nations. Second, it is a liberal definition, which seeks to apply the principles of political liberalism to women on the same terms as men. Third, it is a reformist definition. Feminism is reduced to achieving equality through legal reforms.

While probably the most common definition of feminism, as reflected by the popularity of Wikipedia, it is nonetheless contested by many feminist movements for providing a limited understanding of feminism. Following this definition uncritically, for example, feminism would appear to be simply about agitating for, protecting and enforcing women rights *within* the current social, political and economic system, without ever questioning the institutions in which these rights are negotiated. Yet, one of the main contributions of radical feminism, at the end of the 1960s, was precisely in the questioning of the inequalities induced by - and intrinsic to - these institutions. The status and emancipation of women will not be improved by merely changing the existing/orthodox legislation – what *must* be addressed and dismantled is the patriarchal system that animates these institutions and therefore perpetuates the subordination of women.

² Source : <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism> [accessed 10/01/2018]

Intersectionality

For the highly influential activist and author bell hooks (2015), feminism is the struggle to end sexist oppression. According to her, this struggle “takes place anytime anywhere any female or male resists sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. Feminist movement happens when groups of people come together with an organized strategy to take action to eliminate patriarchy” (hooks, 2015: xii). When hooks (2015:33) goes on to argue that feminism “directs our attention to systems of domination and the interrelatedness of sex, race, and class oppression”, she is clearly indicating that feminism cannot be reduced to a single-issue lens, and a feminist perspective should include an intersectional framework approach. Coined by critical race theorist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (see Crenshaw, 1991), the origins of intersectionality, “are feminist, specifically, black feminist scholarship’s attempt to theorise the overlapping qualities, as well as the tensions between formations of ‘race’ and gender” (Cudworth, 2015, 93). Intersectional scholarship has shown how different systems of power and injustice, not only racism and sexism, but also classism or ableism, do not act independently of each other and, to be understood more properly, should be examined as interrelated forms of discrimination. In other words, it is *impossible* to adequately tackle patriarchy without simultaneously addressing other forms of oppression, such as capitalism or white supremacy, which take part in individual experiences of sexist oppression. Liberal understandings of feminism are therefore restrictive. Feminism should be seen as a struggle for total liberation, one that includes resistance to male domination, and a human domination over species too.

In terms of the structure of the paper, first the chapter will offer a deeper insight into what anarchism is, and the emancipatory grounds upon which it stands. Second, a case for vegan-anarchism will be made, which will be followed by an equivalent case for anarcha-feminism being articulated. Before concluding the chapter will focus critical attention toward the ways in which inter-species struggles converge, with a critical reading of capitalism, and the commodification of women and non-human animals.

THE EMANCIPATORY GROUNDS UPON WHICH ANARCHISM(S) STANDS

Anarchy is commonly perceived as being synonymous with disorder, chaos, and violence. However, anarchy does not mean the absence of law and order – it is *an-arkhé*, “without authority”, “leadership” or “hierarchy” (see White and Williams, 2012). More generally, anarchy means rejecting any form of domination or exploitation, any system of *archy*, such as hierarchy, monarchy, oligarchy or patriarchy. While anarchism embraces and upholds a diverse and radical diversity of approaches; it is only a half-joke to say that there are as many anarchisms as there are anarchists, since at its heart there are significant common grounds upon which they stand. Anarchism is a political theory and practice that aims to abolish traditional forms of institutions. More precisely, it seeks to abolish dominant institutions, whether capitalist, patriarchal, racist, colonialist or heterosexist. Anarchism is a principle or a theory of life and behaviour based on horizontality, self-management, and consensus-based decision-making rather than hierarchical and centralized structures (see Goodwin, 1989, Kropotkin, 2002; Ward, 1982). Therefore, anarchism advocates self-governed societies based on voluntary institutions. It holds the state to be unnecessary and harmful since it is governed by a dominant class that monopolizes decision-making and through its police represses any practice that endangers its monopoly on power.

Anarchism is therefore opposed to any form of domination through which a majority would establish its privileges on a minority under the guise of social order. As Simon Springer (2015a: 3) writes, it entails “the rejection of all the interlocking systems of domination, including capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, neoliberalism, militarism, classism, racism, nationalism, ethnocentrism, sexism, Orientalism, ableism, genderism, ageism, speciesism, homophobia, transphobia, organized religion, and, of course, the state.” The idea is not to prioritize some of our commitments, or to fight particular oppressions one after the other, but to completely and simultaneously oppose them. An anarchist perspective therefore will not hierarchize one struggle over another, nor assume that one must precede the other – which is precisely what distinguishes anarchism from orthodox Marxism, which emphasises the importance of anti-capitalist struggle. Unlike Marxism, anarchism rejects the idea of the revolution as a final goal that may be reached after many transitive steps, including a dictatorship of the proletariat. This difference also helps separate anarchism from other anti-capitalist struggles, which assume systems of oppressions will automatically disappear with the abolition of capitalism.

Most of all, anarchism seeks to establish anarchy, that is to say a society in which individuals are brought to cooperate as equals, not before a law imposed from above, but based on non-hierarchical free associations. Anarchism is therefore not only a process of abolishing institutions, but also a process of establishing autonomy before these institutions. It seeks to dismantle any unequal power relation through voluntary cooperation, altruism, self-management and mutual aid.

DISCUSSION 1: SHOULD ANARCHISTS BE VEGAN? A CASE FOR VEGAN-ANARCHISM

Given that anarchism is opposed to social domination and oppressive violence, it seems reasonable to suppose that such an opposition would be naturally (empathetically) extended towards other sentient beings, in ways that fundamentally reject speciesism and *anthroparchy*. To offer a deeper reading of what we understand to be anthroparchy, we draw attention toward Erika Cudworth's original reflection:

I have developed the term ‘anthroparchy’ to capture the social ordering of human relations to the ‘environment’. Anthroparchy literally means ‘human domination’, and I see anthroparchy as a social system, a complex and relatively stable set of relationships in which the ‘environment’ is dominated through formations of social organization which privilege the human... I consider that anthroparchy has certain advantages over other possible terms such as ‘anthropocentrism’ and ‘speciesism’ (Calvo, 2008: 34).

As to what the advantages are over speciesism, Cudworth considers that this term:

...suggests a practice, a kind of behaviour and is a parallel term to those describing other undesirable practices, such as racism, sexism, and class discrimination. [But] we do not (just) live in societies which discriminate against non-human species. Rather, we live in societies which are organized around a species hierarchy, a hierarchy in which the needs, desires, interests and even whims of human beings shape the kinds of relationships we are likely to have with non-human species. (ibid)

And yet, the 21st Century anarchist movement, despite enjoying a popular resurgence of interest among a whole spectrum of social movements and within critical academic communities across

the social sciences, has yet to deal adequately with its speciesist privileges. As underlined by Ian Werkheiser (2013), there is debate and disagreement among anarchists as to how nonhuman animals ought to be regarded. For some branches of anarchism, human beings are classified at the apex of a hierarchically structured "animal kingdom"; indeed the human status is reified to the extent that they are seen as not a part of nature, but *apart from* nature (an entity that includes nonhuman animals). This hierarchy reflects the supposed superiority of "the human", and human exceptionalism is therefore used to justify the ongoing dominion over nonhuman animals, who can be exploited in whatever ways deemed appropriate for the benefit of humans (Hall, 2011:378).

Challenging this deeply-rooted, yet both ontologically and ethically problematic demarcation between "human" and "animal" is often met with aggression and hostility. This is particularly evident when calling out the rights-violations inherent in the instrumental (ab)use of nonhuman animals for human ends. For example, though the chapter draws favourable attention to Social Ecology as advanced by Murray Bookchin, it is important to acknowledge that Bookchin was one of the most outspoken critics of the idea of 'animal rights'. Indeed Bookchin (1982: 362) argued that drawing attention toward our ethical duties in the relationship between nonhuman animals might "cheapen the meaning of real [human] suffering and cruelty" (Bookchin (1982:362). This is a particularly extreme position to take: even those, like Kant, who argued that we have no direct duties toward other animals, acknowledged a causal link between animal abuse and human abuse.

"If a man shoots his dog because the animal is no longer capable of service... his act is inhuman and damages in himself that humanity which it is his duty to show towards mankind. If he is not to stifle his human feelings, he must practice kindness towards animals, for he who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men (Kant, 1997: 212).

Elsewhere, key anarchist figures have disagreed with Élisée Reclus's premise that killing is a form of domination and rather consider that there is nothing wrong with harming or killing sentient creatures. In this view, death and predation are inevitable parts of nature and killing for food cannot be seen as a form of domination as long as it is necessary. Anarcho-primitivists, for instance, support hunting. One of the main advocates of this sub-current, Derrick Jensen, justifies the eating of nonhuman animals out of necessity: "When you take the life of someone to eat or otherwise use so you can survive, you become responsible for the survival—and dignity—of that other's community" (2006:138). As Peter Gelderloos (2011:5) points out, "The predator does not dominate the prey, nor does it negate them. It enters into a relationship with them, and this relationship is mutual—or in other words, of a sort that anarchists should find interesting and potentially inspiring". According to these authors, as Ian Werkheiser (2013:175) writes, vegans are "so alienated from nature that they are able to imagine that suffering and death are not necessary parts of a natural and whole life, and to imagine that it is possible to consume without causing suffering to non-human animals". This sentiment shows that for some, far from necessarily implying each other, anarchism and veganism can be thought as separate if not opposite perspectives.

While there are still many anarchists who are unreconstructed speciesists and, certainly not vegan, a significant (and increasing) current of the anarchist movement condemns wholeheartedly the consumption and exploitation of nonhuman animals by human beings. As mentioned earlier, this is the case where a choice exists, and the decision to use (kill) another sentient being is not essential, i.e. a matter of survival. This current of thought has been in particular developed by Brian

Dominick (1995) who coined the concept of "veganarchism" in his famous essay, *Animal Liberation and Social Revolution, a vegan perspective on anarchism or an anarchist perspective on veganism*. Yet, it was not the first time that the connection between anarchism and the fight against animal exploitation was made. As early as 1901, Élisée Reclus (1901:2) wrote an essay *On Vegetarianism* in which he questioned the fickleness of morality when applied to nonhuman animals – these "brothers" whom we eat and who nonetheless "love as we do, feel as we do, and, under our influence, progress or retrogress as we do". In making the connection between our treatment of nonhuman animals, the human history of wars and colonization and, more generally, our aspiration to dominate nature, Reclus draws vital attention toward several neglected relationships. Of these, arguable the most relevant to consider here is, first, the importance of an antispeciesist perspective taking root within the anarchist movement. Second, that some of the key ecological questions of his era - and equally our own - are politicized. To him, the violent mistreatment of nonhuman animals is symptomatic of how humans destroy the environment to meet their own ends and acts as a basis for violence against fellow humans. Despite the term "speciesism" being coined only 70 years later, it would have been no surprise to find it in the writings of Reclus. Indeed, to Reclus, overcoming intrahuman oppressions, such as nationalism or racism, and human-animal oppression is part of the same process – both imply viewing one another as part of a global extended family composed of all living things. He writes:

For the great majority of vegetarians, the question is not whether their biceps and triceps are more solid than those of the flesh-eaters ... for them the important point is the recognition of the bond of affection and goodwill that links man (sic) to the so-called lower animals, and the extension to these our brothers of the sentiment which has already put a stop to cannibalism among men. The reasons which might be pleaded by anthropophagists against the disuse of human flesh in their customary diet would be as well-founded as those urged by ordinary flesh-eaters today. The arguments that were opposed to that monstrous habit are precisely those we vegetarians employ now. The horse and the cow, the rabbit and the cat, the deer and the hare, the pheasant and the lark, please us better as friends than as meat. We wish to preserve them either as respected fellow-workers, or simply as companions in the joy of life and friendship (Reclus, 1901:4).

While uncommon at the time, Elisee Reclus's opposition to meat-eating and the oppression of nonhuman animals was not completely isolated within the anarchist movement. The Russian anarchist Piotr Kropotkin (1993, 136) also claimed that "civilized man (sic) ... will extend his principles of solidarity to the whole human race, and even to the animals". This shared perspective comes as no surprise given that anarchism advocates rejecting any form of domination or exploitation without any gradation between the different social struggles. As Dominick argues:

I am vegan because I have compassion for animals; I see them as beings possessed of value not unlike humans. I am an anarchist because I have that same compassion for humans, and because I refuse to settle for compromised perspectives, half-assed strategies and sold-out objectives. As a radical, my approach to animal and human liberation is without compromise: total freedom for all, or else (1995:4-5).

Since human and nonhuman oppressions are linked, veganism is an essential part of anarchism. Veganarchism here shows its proximity with feminist approaches (such as that of Carol J. Adams), ecofeminist perspectives (according to Dominick, the destruction of the environment is due to anthropocentrism) and critical race studies. To Dominick (1995:8), "to decide one oppression is valid and the other not is to consciously limit one's understanding of the world; it is to engage

oneself in voluntary ignorance, more often than not for personal convenience". According to veganarchists, the source of these oppressions is the Establishment – the dominant institutions, which are presided by the statist and capitalist system. As Torres argues, "as a needless and unnecessary form of hierarchy, anarchists should reject the consumption, enslavement, and subjugation of non-human animals for human ends, and identify it as yet another oppressive aspect of the relations of capital and a needless form of domination" (2007:209). Therefore, veganism cannot remain only a consumer choice within the capitalist system. Consumption alone will not change a system based on the exploitation of human and nonhuman animals – the entire system must be changed.

Brian Dominick's wholehearted rejection of appeals to consumerism as the means to enact a new peaceable future underpins his criticism of "liberal" veganism. Put succinctly, "liberal" veganism is a form of veganism underpinned by individuals concern about the exploitation of nonhuman animals, but one which fails to connect such exploitation with capitalism. For veganarchists such a thought is that simply consuming products from the capitalist industry will help fundamentally change things, is shall we say at best, naive. Veganism should be conceived as the natural consequence of the resistance to social exploitation. Many anarchists are therefore quite critical of the current trend of existing institutions and social movements, which pushes us towards defining our civic actions in terms of consumption, as if our action could be reduced to consumption – even if sustainable and ethical.

Similarly, veganarchism is essentially abolitionist and opposed to reformism. Animal welfare regulations will not free nonhuman animals. According to Brian Dominick (1995:9), the law is "anti-animal", as is shown by state subsidization of the meat and dairy industry and vivisection and by its opposition to animal rights activists. According to a classic anarchist perspective (for instance, that of Mikhail Bakunin or Emma Goldman), state laws are fundamentally unjust since they are based on coercion. Because they are used to serve the interests of those who are already in power, they reproduce unjust power relationships. Even if the state might authorize certain reforms regarding nonhuman animal exploitation, this will not change the fundamental power relationships between human and nonhuman animals. The state's lack of concern for animals is the reason why veganism should be anarchist.

Moreover, there is sometimes a temptation to think that anarchism is guided by the ideal of a revolution that would dismantle any existing institutions. Yet, the anarchist revolution is not so much external than internal. Driven by "the confluence of action, being, and rebellion, wherein there is no separation of theory and practice", it is a philosophy of everyday life, encouraging people to "tak[e] control of one's own individual life and creat[e] alternatives on the ground" (Springer, 2015b: 213). The revolutionary ideal that inspires anarchism may therefore be understood as an inward process of freeing ourselves from our own alienation. Alienation here designates the inability of people to see their exploitation and the resulting belief that domination is justified (Zerzan, 2002). Therefore, to dis-alienate oneself means challenging the beliefs and cultural norms that guide our representations and practices since birth. As argued by Dominick (1995:6), "it is we who are the enemy; overthrowing the oppressors in our heads will be the revolution". It is precisely this alienation that vegans seek to overthrow when they address the speciesist beliefs rooted in society.

According to veganarchists, alienation includes the ignorance – or rather a more or less conscious refusal – of the reality of nonhuman animal exploitation. Yet, this ignorance is not natural, but results from our oppressive capitalist society. Human beings have a natural compassion towards each other, which veganarchists extend to all sentient beings. Causing pain to another

living being requires both a cultural construction and a moral effort. In order to silence our feeling of compassion and the cognitive dissonance resulting from meat consumption, one must either conceal the reality of animal exploitation (for instance, by placing slaughterhouses outside cities) or make people believe that it is natural, normal, and necessary to eat nonhuman animals – a powerful combination that Melanie Joy (2011) refers to as "carnism". Because veganism places this des-alienation as a major step of its fight against animal exploitation, it can be considered an anarchist process.

Another common mistake about anarchism is to conflate the revolutionary *project* and *process*. The anarchist revolution should not be seen as an event, but a process. Anarchism rejects the idea of the revolution as a final goal that may be reached after many transitive steps. Unlike Marxism, it does not seek to pursue a revolutionary project, but a process that should be realized *here and now* (Springer, 2012). As a result, what is at stake is an 'infinitely demanding' struggle (Critchley, 2007) led by individuals in their daily practices. Anarchism is therefore not a project, but a praxis. As argued by Dominick:

Action is not so limited. It can be found in our daily lives, our routine and not-so-routine activities. When we assert our beliefs by speaking out in conversation, on the job, at the dinner table, we are *acting* (Dominick, 1995:12-13).

As for anarchists, it is in their ordinary, everyday practices, at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, at home, in the street or at work, that vegan activists attempt to fight these dominant ideologies and devise alternative ways of living (see Véron, 2016; White, 2017). Because our most ordinary actions testify to our alienation, it is also through these actions that we can free ourselves and change things. Acknowledging that the revolution must become part of our lifestyle is a major step towards freeing everyday life from alienation and making it a truly revolutionary process. Activism is thus no longer extraordinary, temporarily cutting us from our everyday life, but it is ordinary – present in our smallest and seemingly most insignificant actions as a practice that seeks to transform everyday life via everyday life (see Véron, 2016; White, 2017).

Such an understanding of activism echoes the anarchist notion of "propaganda of the deed", understood not as a form of violent action, but as a form of prefigurative politics (Graeber, 2002). The concept implies that activists must not only advocate something, nor only fight to achieve it, but they must also show in their own lives that such things are possible and they must attempt to realize them (Werkheiser, 2013). This idea is in line with the definition of the activist by Dominick:

The role of the revolutionist is simple: make your life into a miniature model of the alternative, revolutionary society you envision. You are a microcosm of the world around you, and even the most basic among your actions affect the social context of which you are a part. Make those effects positive and radical in their nature (Dominick, 1995:13).

Therefore, veganism can be perceived as anarchist. It opposes an unjustified form of domination and should logically oppose the other oppressions to which it is linked. It is an everyday life movement, that is to say a movement that changes everyday life via everyday life. Both veganism and anarchism are rooted in our actions and routines. The reunion of both movements within veganarchism is not only theoretical – it is also methodological and practical since both assume the same mode of action. Unlike liberal veganism, veganarchism indicates the need for "total liberation" (see Springer's chapter this volume). It also suggests how this everyday revolution could be carried out and what non-hierarchized and non-exploitative relationships could mean.

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BRILLIANT, THANKS SIMON!

DISCUSSION II: SHOULD ANARCHISTS BE FEMINISTS? A CASE FOR ANARCHA-FEMINISM

According to L. Susan Brown (2003), “Anarchism is a political philosophy that opposes *all* relationships of power, it is inherently feminist. An anarchist who supports male domination contradicts the implicit critique of power which is the fundamental principle upon which all of anarchism is built.” While this might theoretically be true, anarchism does not always entail gender oppression within its struggle against all forms of domination.

Historically, anarchism has often ignored feminism and the question of women in society. When the concept of anarchism emerged, in the second half of 19th century, anarchist philosophy was almost entirely devoted to men, as were communism and socialism. What mattered most was to organize male workers, ensure them good wages and working conditions in order for them to protect their families. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, one of the most influential theorists of anarchism, was fiercely opposed to the emancipation of women. Arguing that certain hierarchies of power are legitimate, among which was a father’s patriarchal authority over his wife and children, he maintained that the woman’s place was at home, as a wife and mother (Proudhon, 1860). Convinced of the natural inferiority of women, he even wrote a deeply anti-feminist pamphlet, *La Pornocratie ou Les Femmes dans les temps modernes* (1875). While Proudhon’s defence of patriarchy was subject to debates and controversies in his lifetime, it has nonetheless influenced anarchists and was later concealed by many analysts.

Moreover, anarchist circles are far from being free from sexism. Many anarchist men behave in sexist ways and activist groups are marked by patriarchal and paternalistic power relationships, illustrated by misogynistic views and sometimes even sexual aggressions. Feminist perspectives or critical discussions of gender have often been subjected to backlash within these groups. Anarcha-feminism, which we will present in the next section, has therefore often been a way for anarchist women to oppose and overcome sexism within anarchist circles.

Besides, the history of anarchism – and many other social struggles – has been marked by the idea that men’s struggles are general and universal, whereas women’s are specific and particular. This view has been constantly reproduced in anarchist narratives, which have often considered male experience as the default. By forgetting how gender deeply impacts any form of social experience, condition, or struggle, anarchist scenes have helped maintain this default sexist notion of politics. Another key example of how activist circles have helped reproduce power relations is the fact that the oppression of women is often eclipsed by the primacy of the fight against capitalism as the fundamental root of all oppression. Feminist struggles have therefore been perceived of as having lesser importance than the struggle of male wagedworkers, which illustrates a hierarchization of struggles in conflict with the anarchist ideal.

Finally, for a large number of anarchists, only virile and aggressive direct action is regarded as useful activism. Any other form of participation in anarchist struggle is deemed marginal and accessory, which demonstrates another form of hierarchization – that of the means of struggle. However, there are many other ways of working towards anarchy that are not based on violence, including but not limited to DIY projects and mutual aid. This perspective demonstrates a particularly gendered view of activism, since anarchist women are often the ones who are involved

in such practices. Glorifying only virile action is sexist since it leads to underestimating the role of women in anarchist struggle.

Promoting only confrontational direct action and marginalizing the issue of women's emancipation and oppression are part of the internal contradictions that affect the anarchist movement. Anarcha-feminism can be an assertion that it is essential for anarchism to overcome this contradiction and, more generally, to fight against gender dynamics within social movements.

Anarcha-feminism

While the term "anarchism" emerged in the 1840-50s and that of "feminism" in the 1870-80s, the term "anarcha-feminism" was not coined until the 1970s. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, most anarchists did not use the term "feminism" to discuss gender issues, but rather "The Woman Question" or "women's emancipation". While the term was already in use during the lifetime of Emma Goldman and although she is today regarded as a feminist icon, she never used it in her writings to identify herself. We have previously evoked how the topic of feminism has been dealt with in anarchist circles, bearing in mind that these circles were predominantly composed of a male audience. Rather than underlining how anarchist men have dealt with gender, we suggest to now look at how anarchist women have laid the foundations for anarcha-feminism as we know it.

One of the first feminist critiques of traditional anarchism stemmed from anarchist women, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Louise Michel, Lucy Parsons, Emma Goldman, Voltairine de Cleyre and Virginia Bolten. According to them, women's emancipation is not an "added challenge" in the struggle against alienation. It is impossible to understand capitalist oppression without understanding that the oppression of women is an integral part of this system. Similarly, no anti-capitalist revolution can be carried out without the full and equal participation of women. It is precisely the convergence between "The Woman Question" and the anti-capitalist struggle that explains the divergences between anarcha-feminism and other currents of feminism.

Historically, anarchists have advanced equality, but not as equal integration of living beings into oppressive systems. The anarchist understanding of equality means opposing any forms of hierarchies and oppressions, including capitalism, racism, nationalism, sexism and patriarchy. This understanding of equality goes beyond the liberal feminist idea of equal rights for women. Here lies one of the main differences between anarcha-feminism and traditional feminism – the view that the exploitation of women cannot be dissociated from the wider context of economic and political exploitation. According to anarchist feminists, there is no point in fighting for equal integration of women in an oppressive, unequal, and exploitation system. When feminists campaigned for women's right to vote in the late 19th early 20th century, most anarchist women did not support the suffragette movement. As argued by Emma Goldman:

Her [a woman's] development, her freedom, her independence, must come from and through herself. First, by asserting herself as a personality, and not as a sex commodity. Second, by refusing the right to anyone over her body; by refusing to bear children, unless she wants them; by refusing to be a servant to God, the State, society, the husband, the family, etc. ... Only that, and not the ballot, will set woman free, will make her a force hitherto unknown in the world, a force for real love, for peace, for harmony; a force of divine fire, of life-giving; a creator of free men and women (1910: n.p)

Anarchist women argue that only by themselves can women become emancipated and empowered. Neither men, neither the laws nor the state can bring about their liberation – women need to become the only agents of their own freedom. As pointed out by Carol Ehrlich ((1977, n.p.)) in her essay *Socialism, Anarchism, and Feminism*.

Commented [RJW2]: (1977, n.p.)

Because they are anarchists, they work to end all power relationships, all situations in which people can oppress each other. Unlike some radical feminists who are not anarchists, they do not believe that power in the hands of women could possibly lead to a non-coercive society. And unlike most socialist feminists, they do not believe that anything good can come out of a mass movement with a leadership elite. In short, neither a workers' state nor a matriarchy will end the oppression of everyone. The goal, then, is not to "seize" power, as the socialists are fond of urging, but to abolish power.

Despite this early awareness for feminist issues by anarchist women, only the second-wave feminist generation in the 1970s will more systematically theorize the relationship between feminism and anarchism by connecting the oppression of women to capitalist and statist oppression. Yet, the anarchist legacy is more than relevant for the feminist movement. By opposing all forms of oppression and promoting instead self-government and non-hierarchical associations, it does not pretend that feminist struggles are secondary, unlike other anti-capitalist movements. In that sense, anarchism should always be feminist: anarcho-feminism simply emphasises the fact that feminism is inherent to anarchism.

DISCUSSION III: RECOGNISING THE CONVERGENCE OF INTER-SPECIES STRUGGLES: CAPITALISM, AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF WOMEN AND NON HUMAN ANIMALS

In order to understand the intersection of oppression and the need for interconnected social struggles, attention is now turned towards the process of capitalist appropriation of human and nonhuman animals. While it is important to note that speciesist relations were evident long before capitalism, as Sanbonmatsu (2017, 1-2) argues, "by the end of the twentieth century, speciesism under advanced capitalist conditions had at last reached its zenith as a totalitarian, global system of surveillance, technological control, and mass murder without moral, spatial, temporal, biological, or ontological limits."

We will here distinguish two components of this appropriation: the commodification of individuals (women/nonhuman animals) and the commodification of social struggles (feminism/veganism).

1) The capitalist commodification of women and nonhuman animals

Commodification is a process by which goods, services, ideas and people are turned into commodities, that is to say objects of economic value. When applied to women, this process is marked by an objectification of the female body (see Wrenn, 2017). Women are reduced to their bodies and constantly commodified by capitalist society. Advertising and media messages judge, mould, and mutilate their bodies through weight loss diets, plastic surgery or cosmetic products in order to create a unified, racialized, and eroticized model of the female body, which informs the collective psyche. This commodification of the female body goes hand in hand with its hypersexualization. Regarded as a mere sexual object, the female body is fragmented and reduced

to certain body parts that can be sold or bought – often the breasts and buttocks. Women are thus reduced to consumer goods.

Similarly, capitalism reduces nonhuman animals to resources and to commodified and deindividualized objects, designated by collective or generic terms, such as “livestock” or “meat”. While recognizing that nonhuman animals were already exploited and killed before capitalism, the latter has brought nonhuman animal commodification to another degree. According to David Nibert (2002:237),

Capitalism continued the ten-thousand-year-old tradition of exploiting humans and other animals for the production of wealth and privilege, an exploitation that continued to bind the fate of devalued humans and other animals.” With the mechanisation of their exploitation, nonhuman animals’ bodies are now genetically selected and artificially inseminated, their food is enriched and meticulously calculated.

In other words they are biologically engineered for profitable exploitation, and valued accordingly. That is to say in ways that “serve to maximise the owner’s profit, even if these fundamentally override and violate all ethical norms” (White, 2017, 275).

Commodification affects women as it does nonhuman animals: and it remains as one of the main processes through which capitalist exploitation establishes and consolidates its power. The work of eco-feminists has been particularly important in making explicit the connections here, particularly focused on the fragmentation, objectification and ultimate consumption of female bodies (through the male gaze) and animal bodies (through the human gaze). Therefore, addressing the continuing oppression of women and nonhuman animals implies understanding the interconnectedness of such a process. As Kathryn Gillespie (2013:2) points out, “understanding this commodification is important both for the sake of the individual animals laboring and dying within the industry and for the more extensive project of uncovering the consequences of gendered commodification of all bodies — nonhuman and human — and the violent power structures to which they are subjected”. These connections are essential to understand how capitalist modes of domination and violence operate and to address human and nonhuman exploitation as part of the same process. By highlighting the connection between the domination of nature and the domination of women and non-human animals, vegan ecofeminism has extended traditional approaches of political ecology. One of the most radical and influential individuals around intersectionality and vegan-feminism is Carol Adams. The expression of feminism she advances is one that is entirely on point with the radical possibilities of feminism we draw on here:

We believe that feminism is a transformative philosophy that embraces the amelioration of life on earth for all life-forms, for all natural entities. We believe that all oppressions are interconnected: no one creative will be free until all are free - from abuse, degradation, exploitation, pollution, and commercialization (Adams and Donovan, 19954, 3).

Other feminists such as Gena Corea (1984), Marti Kheel (1987), Val Plumwood (1993; 2002) and Lisa Kemmerer (2011) have similarly exposed the interconnections between the oppression of nature, women, animals and people of colour, thereby clarifying why intersecting forms of oppression must be challenged in order to end the oppression of all beings.

2) The capitalist commodification of feminism and veganism

One of the main strengths of capitalism lies in its capacity to absorb, reduce and commodify political values, including radical movements for social justice. This power explains why capitalism succeeds not only in commodifying women and nonhuman animals, but also their struggles – feminism and veganism.

The capitalist commodification of feminism is blatant when considering women's magazines. One of the most emblematic examples of this "commodified feminism" is probably *Elle* magazine, whose French edition dreams of a "pop, light and uninhibited" feminism,³ that is to say "a grown-up and generous feminism, which would not be a mask put on indescribable and ancestral drives – neither the hatred of men and their sexual desire nor the hatred of women".⁴ According to its colleague *Glamour*, feminism should be "relaxed" and "non-aggressive" and it should express the voice of women who are "too much in love with men to want to dominate them."⁵ Feminist killjoys please abstain. This form of "feminism" perfectly complements the numerous advertisements for beauty products, clothes, and pressures to be thin that can be found in these magazines. Feminism is here reduced to a pink and sparkly "girl power" theme, which can be bought long before puberty. Most clothing or cosmetics brands have understood this very well and turned feminism into a marketing strategy. Here, capitalism not only re-appropriates feminist themes, but it invents a new form of feminism consistent with consumerist values. In this perspective, being a feminist means daring to buy three new Vuitton handbags, "Because I'm Worth It". The emancipation of women is stripped of its meaning and assimilated to a form of "personal development", without any further questioning of gendered values and practices, which, in turns, helps maintain patriarchal domination.

A similar trend can be identified with veganism. Whereas veganism is a political strategy to end animal exploitation, capitalism manages to strip it of its radical impetus via a new packaging – that of a "healthy" and "alternative" lifestyle. Veganism becomes a highly profitable business opportunity, characterised by a huge amount of "green juices", "detox meals" and "veggie burgers", which Hollywood celebrities are quick to adopt. Many enterprises involved in animal exploitation find in veganism a new way of greenwashing their activities in the form of "ethical washing". They start invading supermarket shelves with non-dairy milks and seitan sausages along with their traditional animal-based products. This form of "neoliberal veganism" – that is, veganism reduced to a lucrative venture – is encouraged by capitalism since it does not question or threaten the wider social and political system and fits in perfectly with its consumerist perspective.

Both the feminist and vegan struggle are continuously neutralised and reduced to capital assets by the logic of profit and financial gains. However, capitalism is not the only system of power that contributes to neutralising social struggles. As underlined by Brian Dominick (1995), the state is on the side of those who exploit animals and the law is decidedly anti-animal, as shown with the numerous government subsidies to the meat and dairy industry. The connection between the state, the legal system and the meat and dairy industry has been demonstrated in many countries with the proliferation of ag-gag laws, which criminalize whistleblowers and those who oppose animal

³<http://www.elle.fr/Societe/News/Cette-semaine-dans-ELLE-la-parole-a-une-nouvelle-generation-de-feministes-3443510>

⁴*Elle*, « trop de féminismes ? », 01/03/2013, <http://www.elle.fr/Societe/Edito/Trop-de-feminismes-2362260> [accessed 10/10/2017].

⁵*Glamour*, « On peut être blonde et féministe », n°154, mars 2017.

exploitation. The dairy industry has recently bended the European Union to its will by preventing dairy nouns to be applied to non-dairy products, such as milk or yoghurt. In France, it is now compulsory for public institutions to serve meat, eggs, or dairy products in their canteens since the introduction of a legislative decree in 2011.

These elements explain why a deeper understanding of the statist and capitalist system of power and domination is essential to understand the roots of women and nonhuman animal exploitation, which is precisely what an anarchist reflection offers. By questioning the role played by the state, the economic system, and other forms of social hierarchies, anarchism offers a political perspective on human interactions and on human/more-than-human interactions. This perspective enables us to espouse an ethic of justice inclusive of humans, nonhuman animals, and ecosystems, and to follow a holistic revolutionary strategy with the potential to combat all forms of inequality and oppression.

Conclusion

Many critical animal studies and ecofeminist scholars, such as Carol J. Adams or Marta Kheel, have connected the exploitation of non-human animals with the oppression of nature and of marginalized groups of humans. However, these works sometimes underestimate or minimize how these oppressions are closely interwoven in our social, cultural, economic and political systems. In addition, few have attempted to offer a revolutionary programme that would allow human and nonhuman society to advance towards non-hierarchical relationships. An important component of anarchism is its profound critique of power and exploitation, along with its strategies for social change and environmental advocacy. Adopting an anarchist perspective would enable feminist and vegan movements to reassess these power relationships as well as their own strategies and modes of action.

In the final analysis we contend that feminist and vegan praxis are not only close to anarchism – to realize their full potential they actually *should* be anarchist. Anarchism offers a systematic understanding of the roots of the exploitation of women, nonhuman animals, marginalized groups and ecosystems, by highlighting the role played by the state, capitalism, and other hierarchical organisations in this exploitation. It also suggests how to resist these relations of power and domination. Therefore, anarchism should be given better recognition among the vegan and feminist movements. On the other hand, anarchism cannot pretend to dismantle existing oppressions without fighting against sexist and speciesist oppression both theoretically and practically within activist circles. This explains why a convergence between the (eco)feminist, vegan, and anarchist struggles is not only desirable, but essential to the success of their fight for social justice, freedom and liberation. Such a perspective seems integral to advancing a contemporary anarchist political ecology, conceived as a holistic strategy aimed at identifying the interdependency between the exploitation of humans and more-than-humans, and with the potential to fight all forms of injustice and oppression.

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