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Animal Geographies, Anarchist Praxis and Critical Animal Studies

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Anarchism is the purity of rebellion. A pig who struggles wildly and rends that air with his cries while he is held to be slaughtered, and a baby who kicks and screams when, wanting warmth and his mother's breast, he is made to wait in the cold - these are two samples of natural rebellion. Natural rebellion always inspires either deep sympathy and identification with the rebelling creature, or a stiffening of the heart and an activation of aggressive-defensive mechanisms to silence an accusing truth. The truth is that each living being is an end in itself; that nothing gives a being the right to make another a mere instrument of his purposes. The rebel against authority holds to this truth in everything that concerns him and recognizes no other judge than himself [sic]. Baldelli (1971:17)

Introduction

In the late 1990s, as a re-vitalised interest in (nonhuman) animal geographies was gaining new momentum and traction in the discipline, Wolch and Emel (1998, p. xi) called for geographers to *critically* engage with the brutal and deceptive geographies of violence that frame many ordinary, every-day human-animal relations in society:

The plight of animals worldwide has never been more serious than it is today. Each year, by the billions, animals are killed in factory farms; poisoned by toxic pollutants and waste; driven from their homes by logging, mining, agriculture, and urbanization; dissected, re-engineered, and used as spare body-parts; and kept in captivity and servitude to be discarded as soon as their utility to people has waned. The reality is mostly obscured by the progressive elimination of animals from everyday human experience, and by the creation of a thin veneer of civility surrounding human-animal relations, embodied largely by language tricks, isolation of death camps, and food preparation routines that artfully disguise the true origins of flesh-food. Despite the efforts made to minimize human awareness of animal lives and fates, however, the brutality of human domination over the animal world and the catastrophic consequences of such dominionism are everywhere evident.

The intervening fifteen years, evidenced by the remarkable number of papers, articles, books, conferences, seminars, workshops, modules, courses and study groups, has seen broader scholarly interest in animal geographies expand considerably. The effect of this on the wider discipline, as Buller (2013, p.308) argues, is akin to: "A gathering swarm, a swelling herd, a flock or a vast shoal; animal geographies...[has] become an increasingly present, dynamic and potentially innovative subfield of geography (to the point at which some hesitate now to refer to a solely 'human geography')." Similarly, across the broader social sciences, recent decades have served witness to a rapid expansion of interest focused on bringing non-human animals out of the shadows of marginality. Diverse approaches are now found in various academic fields such as animal studies (AS), human-animal studies (HAS), and anthro-zoology (for a breakdown of these different nomenclatures see Taylor and Twine, 2014). Unfortunately a great deal of this research has found comfortable alignment within a largely apolitical, safe and sanitized discourse, lacking any *critical* commitment to explicitly challenge the exploitation, oppression and domination that define animal lives (and deaths).

Moreover strong arguments have been made to suggest that esoteric, conservative, apolitical, amoral, and speciesist approaches have assumed a hegemonic status within mainstream animal studies (see Best, 2009). As a reaction to this, as the chapter will argue at greater length, an explicit field dedicated to Critical Animal Studies (CAS) emerged. For Pederson and Stănescu (2012, p. ix) a critical approach to animal studies shifts the perspective of enquiry from the animal "question" to the animal "condition". Having much in common with the animal plight that Wolch and Emel (1998) captured, the animal condition is defined as "the actual life situation of most nonhuman animals in human society and culture, as physically and emotionally experienced with its routine repertoire of violence, deprivation, desperation, agony, apathy, suffering, and death" (Pederson and Stănescu, 2012, p. ix). While acknowledging the important work that has carved out critical spaces within animal geography, the main aim of this chapter is to impress upon the urgency and need for *more* research within the field of CAS to provide more effective tools and strategies of resistance toward the liberation of nonhuman animals, given that "global institutionalized animal use and abuse shows no sign of

decline" (ibid). Within contemporary animal geographies, I want to suggest that many important *liberatory* and critical lines of flight will be created by explicitly engaging anarchist theory and practice. Indeed, at a time when anarchist praxis is blossoming within wider (radical) geography (see Springer et al, 2012; Springer, 2013) this intervention is particularly timely. Before focusing in more detail on what anarchism and the guiding principles of CAS (themselves influenced by anarchist praxis) have to potentially inform and inspire future directions for animal geographies, it is important to recognise already existing critical dimensions within contemporary animal geographies.

Recognising the Critical in Contemporary Animal Geographies

Emel et al (2002, p. 407) acknowledge the way in which animal geographies has begun to interrogate human and nonhuman animal relations, and call for such critical engagement to expand further:

Geography, as a discipline, has provided significant leadership in explicating the history and cultural construction of human and nonhuman animal relations, as well as their gendered and racialized character and their economic embeddedness. This work must continue. There are wide areas of barely touched terrain in comparative cultural analyses, economies of animal bodies, and the geographical history of human-animal relations that need articulation and examination.

Reviewing the animal geographies literature reveals an on-going critical pulse, where the focus on nonhuman animals is consistent with Johnston's (2008, p. 633) claim that "the field of animal geographies has arisen in response to our political and ethical responsibilities to the species who share our planet". For example, geographers have sought to disturb and reconfigure dominant human-animal relations through exploring a myriad of ethical dimensions (e.g. Jones, 2000; Matless, 1994; Roe 2010); engaging with everyday inter-species relationships (e.g. Braun, 2005; Tipper, 2011; Urbanik and Morgan, 2013); re-thinking specific relationships with other animals (e.g. Nast 2006); understanding the co-constitutive ways in which non-human animals make and shape (urban) places (e.g. Wolch, 2002); calling into question representations of 'the wild' and 'wildlife' (e.g. Whatmore and Thorne, 1998); examining gender difference in human-animal interactions (e.g. Herzog, 2007) ;

and calling for nonhuman animals to be included in an enlarged political geography (e.g. Hobson, 2007). More recently, intersectionality and common natures of oppression have begun to be explored. For example, through her work on gendered commodification and the production of dairy and "meat", Gillespie (2013, p. 2) argues that

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.

In many ways, this research has been genuinely liberating and progressive in problematizing and collapsing entrenched binaries concerning human-animal relations, nature-culture, and exposing the anthropocentric, speciesist and humanist roots that have informed representations of "the animal".

Another significant contribution by animal geographers can be seen in the desire to reject the undifferentiated and impersonal collective (*species, herds, "farmed" animals*) and emphasising the individual and unique natures of those sentient beings which are all "subjects of a life" (Regan, 2001, p. 17). This powerful focus on language is a significant step forward to prompt new inter-species connections, by provoking more radical ethical and political questions about our relations with other animals. For example, the (ethical) importance of transgressing the metaphoric collective is exemplified by Jones (2000, p. 281), who argues that:

The moving away from 'face-to-face' positioning of non-humans to making them 'faceless' things must contribute to the cruelty many face today... Any possible switch from relating to non-human others as collectives to relating to them instead as individuals has profound implications for how we live on this planet, and may have a significant narrative for the future.

From a moral perspective, the individualization of animals as opposed to their aggregation also helps undermine the view that sentient pain and suffering can be meaningfully aggregated. In contrast to utilitarian moral theory (e.g. Singer, 1995), the argument that pain (or pleasure) cannot be meaningfully quantified and traded between individuals as only individuals experience pain (or pleasure) forms the core principle of Ryder's (2010, p. 402) moral theory of "Painism". In this

approach the focus of (moral) concern is one which should be "victim centered" and thus never lose sight of the need to concentrate on the "conscious experience of individuals" (Ryder, 1998, p. 269). Importantly, creating new individualised spaces allows new depths, relationships, connections and understanding to emerge. As Masson (2004, p.x) argues:

Animals have a past, a story, a biography. They have histories. Mink and bears, elephants and dolphins, pigs and chickens, cats and dogs: each is a unique somebody, not a disposable something.

Think of the many implications: animals have mothers and fathers, often siblings, friendships, a childhood, youth, maturity. They go through life cycles much the way humans do... their lives can go better or worse for them, whether or not anyone else cares about this.

However, *despite* these promising interventions, and critical contributions within animal geography, the fact remains that *more* nonhuman animals are subject to routine repertoires of violence than ever before. The nonhuman animal plight - in terms of the number of non-human animals involved – is more extensive, and more serious now than at any other time before. Focusing on the farming of nonhuman animals alone, that practice which, "has long been, and continues to be, the most significant social formation of human–animal relations" (Calvo, 2008, p. 32) - the number of non-human animals (ab)used is to all intents and purposes unimaginable. Buller (2013b, p. 157) draws attention to the fact that "the vast majority of the 24 or so billion terrestrial farm animals that are kept and grown for human and other consumption at any one time do so on farms, with an increasing proportion of them on large scale, industrial farm units." Elsewhere, Mitchell (2011, p. 38) observes that:

Worldwide, approximately 55,000,000,000 land-based nonhumans are killed every year in the farming industry (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, 2010). *This is over 150 million individuals each day...* Except for a very tiny minority, all the nonhumans in the industry will meet with a violent death at a relatively young age; all will have been confined during their lives; many will have been mutilated; numerous females will have been repeatedly made pregnant but their young taken away shortly after birth; family structures will have been destroyed." (italics added)

Thus, *despite* these critical and potentially transformative spaces that can be found within animal geographies – which contribute significantly to painting a richer, more detailed emotional, psychological and mental tapestry of nonhuman animals, their capacities for pain and pleasure, love,

friendship, companionship – the sorry truth remains that *more* nonhuman animals are subjected to systematic repertoires of violence than at any other time in history. Reflecting on the mass slaughter of farmed animals in response to the non-lethal foot-and-mouth disease in England in 2001, Scully (2002, p. x) observed that

in a strange way mankind [sic] does seem to be growing more sentimental about animals, and also more ruthless. No age has ever been more solicitous to animals, more curious and caring. Yet no age has ever inflicted upon animals such massive punishments with such complete disregard, as witness scenes to be found on any given day at any modern industrial farm.

Whatever important counter-hegemonic spaces, and strategies of resistance emerging from animal geographies are, they remain insufficient in challenging and transforming these increasingly dominant patterns of violence and dominion. Thus, how can animal geography be pushed forward in new, ever critical and transformative directions to better challenge the oppressive systems of non-human animal domination that are becoming ever *more* pervasive and entrenched in society? There is certainly much to be gained by increasing the visibility of those critical pulses evident within animal geography, while also extending these purposefully to inform new tools of resistance that can begin to better confront the (intersectional) systems of dominion that define human and non-human animal relations. At the very least if more animal geographers could commit themselves (and their work) through embracing a critical animal praxis that works within a *total liberation* framework, one which challenges *all* forms of domination and exploitation that concern human, nonhuman animals and the Earth, this would be a tremendously important development. As a means of encouraging and stimulating such a future, the chapter highlights how a willingness to engage with anarchist praxis, and Critical Animal Studies (CAS) offers many important ways to think about, and more important actively engage with, addressing the animal condition, and transforming this where possible from one of abject misery and suffering, toward peace, pleasure, hope and fulfilment.

Animal Geographies: embracing anarchist lines of flight

Almost forty years have passed since Richard Peet observed that "anarchist theory is a geographical theory" (1975, p. 43). Yet, only very recently has geography experienced an exciting and long-overdue (re)turn to anarchist theory and practice to inspire (human) geographers to challenge and push beyond the existing frontiers of geographical knowledge (Springer et al, 2012). What is understood by anarchism in this context? In stark contrast to the deep and introspective theorising that has accompanied other "radical" geography approaches, "anarchists have always insisted on the priority of life and action to theory and system (David Weick, 1971, p. 10). Inevitably, such openness has encouraged a rich and diverse range of anarchism to flourish (including collectivist anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism, and more individualist types of anarchism). Highlighting the common bonds that unite all anarchist praxis, Springer (2012, p. 1606) cites an unequivocal rejection of "all forms of domination, exploitation, and 'archy' (systems of rule)." Indeed, citing *green anarchism* and *anarcha-feminism* as examples, Ward (2004, p.3) speaks of anarchists' rejection of all forms of (unjustified) external authority as being attractive to "those who believe that animal liberation is an aspect of human liberation".

Certainly in the history of anarchism, some of the most prominent advocates of and influences over anarchist praxis have demonstrated a radical commitment to challenge complex oppressive systems of intersectional domination that limit human and nonhuman integrity and freedom. Emma Goldman (2005, p. 41-42), for example, when paying tribute to the American anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre, wrote:

Fortunately, the great of the world cannot be weighed in numbers and scales; their worth lies in the meaning and purpose they give to existence, and Voltairine has undoubtedly enriched life with meaning and given sublime idealism as its purpose. But, as a study of human complexities she offers rich material. The woman who consecrated herself to the service of the submerged, actually experiencing poignant agony at the sight of suffering whether of children or dumb [sic] animals (she was obsessed by love for the latter and would give shelter and nourishment to every stray cat and dog, even to the extent of breaking with a friend because she objected to her cats invading every corner of the house).

Elsewhere, standing as an inspirational (though oft overlooked) critical animal geographer, is the French anarchist Élisée Reclus (1830-1905). What is particularly important to take from Reclus's work, is (i) the appeal he brings to the abuse of nonhuman animals by drawing on emotional registers

(beauty, ugliness), not abstract philosophical rights-based concepts; (ii) how he draws on personal experience, and invites others to do the same; and (iii) his belief that individuals (and their community) can meaningfully begin to confront and challenge systems of oppression through the decisions they make in the here and now (see White and Cudworth, 2014). This approach is captured best in the short pamphlet *On Vegetarianism* (Reclus, 2013 [1901]). For example, highlighting incidents - barbarous acts - which cast a gloom over his childhood, Reclus recollects:

I can still see the sow belonging to some peasants who were amateur butchers, the cruellest kind. One of them bled the animal slowly, so that the blood fell drop by drop, for it is said that to make a really good blood sausage, the victim must suffer a great deal. And indeed, she let out a continuous cry, punctuated with childlike moans and desperate, almost human pleas. It seemed as if one were listening to a child. (p. 157)

Reclus then goes on to question the ridicule and disgrace that (wider society) reserves for those people to bestow affection and love to "an animal who loves us!" (ibid). Yet these powerful inter-species connections of (mutual) kindness and support are also strongly emphasised by another great anarchist geographer, and contemporary of Reclus, Peter Kropotkin. Epitomised in his work *Mutual Aid* (1998 [1901]) Kropotkin emphasises that, steeped in the struggle for existence that all life faces, a spirit of reciprocity, mutuality and sociality is by no means exclusive to the human animal. For Kropotkin (1998, p. 13) "Whenever I saw animal life in abundance.... I saw Mutual Aid and Mutual Support carried on to an extent which made me suspect in it a feature of the greatest importance for the maintenance of life, the preservation of each species, and its further evolution." Indeed Kropotkin (1998, p. 27) also predicted that mutual aid will be found beyond the animal kingdom, noting the co-operation evident invertebrates (termites, ants, bees) and suggesting that "we must be prepared to learn some day... facts of unconscious mutual support, even from the life of micro-organisms".

For all the foundational work and insight that these (classical) anarchists brought to encourage a broader (ethical) sensibility and justice for nonhuman animals, unfortunately, despite the *anarchist* commitment to recognise and confront all sites of domination and exploitation, the inclusion of

nonhuman animals in recognising commonalities of oppression that transgress species membership has been conspicuous by its absence. As Torres (2007, p. 127) notes, "while social anarchism has been at the forefront of challenging many oppressions, most social anarchists have not been very active – either historically or presently – in challenging the human domination of animals." Indeed several influential anarchists have been hostile to the inclusion of nonhuman animals. Murray Bookchin, for example, argues that only human agency can be regarded as "discursive, meaningful, or moral" (1993: 48). Socha (2012, p. 15), though, forms an excellent (rhetorical) question, which is the basis on which the rest of the chapter builds:

(P)roper contemplation of anarchist traditions leads to concern for animals. Can a society whose abiding objective is freedom from violence, hierarchy, and oppression confine, slaughter, dominate, eat and wear other sentient creatures?

No, of course, it cannot. In terms of mapping out potential synergies within already-existing critical animal geographies, as well as suggesting further anarchist-inspired lines of flight for animal geographies, I wish to draw attention to the field of Critical Animal Studies (CAS), and in particular its guiding principles, many of which have been inspired by anarchist praxis.

In 2001 Steve Best, and Anthony J. Nocella II co-founded the Centre on Animal Liberation Affairs (CALA), which was renamed the Institute for Critical Animal Studies (ICAS) in 2006 (see Nocella et al, 2014; Taylor and Twine, 2014). The term Critical Animal Studies (CAS) emerged following conversations and discussion between a range of animal rights/ liberation academics and activists.

From its very beginning, CAS was *self-consciously* critical, envisaged as a:

necessary and vital alternative to the insularity, detachment, hypocrisy, and profound limitations of mainstream animal studies [which] utterly fail to confront [non-human animals]... as sentient beings who live and die in the most sadistic, barbaric, and wretched cages of technohell that humanity has been able to devise, the better to exploit them for all they are worth (Best et al 2007:, p. 4).

What should also be recognised are the complex boundaries that overlap between different types of animal studies. In seeking to differentiate itself from other more mainstream forms of animal studies, Critical Animal Studies is not a pure/ disconnected/ elitist project, nor does it seek to erase - or

supersede - other progressive forms of critical research that have, and continue to, take place. There are many forms of work - critical theory, ecofeminism and intersectional theory for example - that have strong antecedents and affinity with CAS, and from which there is much still to be learned and debated. As Twine and Taylor (2014, p. 4) highlight:

"Both animal and feminist politics are similarly targeted against dispassionate, institutionalised scholarship based on a rationalist, liberal interpretation of (hegemonic) masculinity, and both seek to expose and overthrow the routinized and naturalised forms of practice based on oppression and abuses of power, which flows from this. It is this which makes them both explicitly *critical*."

To give form to the spaces upon which CAS would seek to build, and design a list that would be accessible to both academic and activist communities, Best et al (2007, p.4) developed the Ten Guiding Principles of Critical Animal Studies (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: "The Ten Principles of Critical Animal Studies"

1. Pursues interdisciplinary collaborative writing and research in a rich and comprehensive manner that includes perspectives typically ignored by animal studies, such as political economy.
2. Rejects pseudo-objective academic analysis by explicitly clarifying its normative values and political commitments, such that there are no positivist illusions whatsoever that theory is disinterested or writing and research are nonpolitical.[CAS supports] experiential understanding and subjectivity.
3. Eschews narrow academic viewpoints and the debilitating theory-for-theory's-sake position in order to link theory to practice, analysis to politics, and the academy to the community.
4. Advances a holistic understanding of the commonality of oppressions, such that speciesism, sexism, racism, ablism, statism, classism, militarism and other hierarchical ideologies and institutions are viewed as parts of a larger, interlocking, global system of domination.
5. Rejects apolitical, conservative, and liberal positions in order to advance an anti-capitalist, and, more generally, a radical anti-hierarchical politics. This orientation seeks to dismantle all structures of exploitation, domination, oppression, torture, killing, and power in favor of decentralizing and democratizing society at all levels and on a global basis.
6. Rejects reformist, single-issue, nation-based, legislative, strictly animal interest politics in favor of alliance politics and solidarity with other struggles against oppression and hierarchy.
7. Champions a politics of total liberation which grasps the need for, and the inseparability of, human, nonhuman animal, and Earth liberation and freedom for all in one comprehensive, though diverse, struggle; to quote Martin Luther King Jr.: "*Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.*"

8. Deconstructs and reconstructs the socially constructed binary oppositions between human and nonhuman animals, a move basic to mainstream animal studies, but also looks to illuminate related dichotomies between culture and nature, civilization and wilderness and other dominator hierarchies to emphasize the historical limits placed upon humanity, nonhuman animals, cultural/political norms, and the liberation of nature as part of a transformative project that seeks to transcend these limits towards greater freedom, peace, and ecological harmony.
9. Openly supports and examines controversial radical politics and strategies used in all kinds of social justice movements, such as those that involve economic sabotage, from boycotts to direct action, toward the goal of peace.
10. Seeks to create openings for constructive critical dialogue on issues relevant to Critical Animal Studies across a wide-range of academic groups; citizens and grassroots activists; the staffs of policy and social service organizations; and people in private, public, and non-profit sectors. Through – and only through — new paradigms of ecopedagogy, bridge-building with other social movements, and a solidarity-based alliance politics, it is possible to build the new forms of consciousness, knowledge, social institutions that are necessary to dissolve the hierarchical society that has enslaved this planet for the last ten thousand years.

There are two further principles that CAS has recently highlighted: “(1) to abolish nonhuman animal oppression, exploitation, and murder on college and university campuses, and (2) to provide space and place for the advocacy of all oppressed groups including nonhuman animals.” (Nocella et al, 2014, p.xxviii). Viewed both individually and collectively many of these principles, with their opposition to all forms of domination and authoritarianism, their commitment to intersectionality, avocation of alliance-politics, certainly find common ground in feminist and anarchist perspectives. The research that has emerged within this exciting field has been of considerable value in pushing knowledge and understanding about the animal condition, and how to respond to this, as well as building new and important bridges within academic and activist communities. This has included notable contributions focusing on queer theory and anti-speciesist praxis (e.g. Grubbs, 2012); critical bioethics (e.g. Twine, 2010); anthroparchy (Calvo, 2008); the myth of sustainable meat (Stănescu, 2010); and women of colour and critical animal studies (Yarborough and Thomas, 2010) that continue to promote understanding toward intersectionality, posthumanism, political economy, animal ethics, body commodification, alliance politics; and human, animal and earth liberation movements.

Certainly, there is a great deal that animal geographers can bring to CAS by foregrounding overriding questions of space and place to their analysis. To give one particularly important example, there is

much work needed to further problematize the *geographies* of those deliberately hidden, out-of-sight and private spaces upon which terrifying amounts of violence, abuse and killing of nonhuman animals - as well as serious forms of human exploitation - occurs. As Carol Adams observed: "Indeed, patriarchal culture surrounds actual butchering with silence. Geographically, slaughterhouses are cloistered. We do not see or hear what transpires there." (1998, p. 49).

Perhaps one of the most important tasks for critical animal geographies is to continue to develop ways that meaningfully engage with those who, often at great personal cost to themselves, engage in direct action to transgress upon these private cloistered spaces of animal abuse. Ultimately, how can academics relate to animal activists in a way that allows them (beyond writing and research) to become better activists themselves. Again these are important ongoing questions which CAS fully embraces:

"CAS is unique in its defence of direct action tactics, its willingness to engage and debate controversial issues such as anti-capitalism, academic repressions, and the use of sabotage as a resistance tactic; its emphasis on the need for total liberation stressing the commonalities binding various oppressed groups; and the importance of learning from and with activists." (Best, 2009, p. 13)

In this context, the final section of this chapter argues that more critical animal geography needs to engage in resistance, and in doing so, can learn a lot from the non-violent principles of anarchist activists. Drawing on anarchist and CAS theory moves to focus in more detail on (a) the importance of direct action, and the need for consistency between means and ends and (b) the question of vegan praxis.

Critical Animal Geographies and direct action

It is vital that more critical animal geographies seek to further understand, explore, and engage (in every sense of the word) with the diverse activist geographies that underpin nonhuman animal and earth liberation movements. In so many ways, *space* is absolutely central to understanding how

(non)humans are currently abused, and how escaping the spaces in which they find themselves is deeply intertwined with their liberation. Contrasting ideas about captive spaces is also a fundamental division within the animal movement. For example, unlike those who identify with more welfarist types of reform for animals, CAS "rejects the exploitation of animal life as an ontological, epistemological and ethico-political strategy" (Jenkins and Stănescu, 2014, p.74), and agitates for the abolition of all these spaces of captivity and abuse: seeking empty cages, not larger cages (see Regan, 2004).

Many activists and organisations aligned with the animal liberation movement identify with - or take inspiration from - anarchist praxis (see White and Cudworth, 2014). Importantly, despite popular misrepresentations of anarchism as a synonym for violence and aggression, it is truer to say that anarchism encourages an ethics of non-violence (e.g. see Baldelli, 1971; Springer, 2014). This call for non-violence has a rich history in anarchist praxis. It is often overlooked that the Russian anarchist Lev Tolstoy's rejection of violence and thoughts toward of civil disobedience were highly influential in informing the ideas of resistance adopted by leading figures such as Ghandi and Martin Luther King and their followers (see Jahanbegloo, 2014). For anarchism and its commitment to prefigurative politics, it is vital that there is consistency between means and ends: violence and coercion is itself an aggressive form of domination. Where violence is, anarchism is not.

Across the world, animal activists who have transgressed private, out-of-sight and hidden spaces of animal abuse - through multiple forms of direct (non-violent, illegal) action – have done much to raise (public) consciousness about the plight of animals. Focusing on farmed animals for example, high profile undercover investigations have exposed and revealed sickening and horrific acts of cruelty against baby calves, cows, chickens, turkeys, pigs, horses, including investigations by *Mercy for Animals* (www.mercyforanimals.org/investigations.aspx); Animal Rights Alliance (Sweden - www.ettlivsomgris.se/english); Hillside Animal Sanctuary (www.hillside.org.uk/); Vegetarians' International Voice for Animals (VIVA) (www.viva.org.uk/search/node/undercover); and Animal Aid

(www.animalaid.org.uk/). All of these first-hand testimonies to extreme abuse and suffering in private farms and abattoirs provoked important media coverage, national outrage, and in several cases prosecution. Indeed Animal Aid, in an attempt to make visible these hidden spaces is campaigning for mandatory CCTV in all UK slaughterhouses, which has met with some success. In the UK, "one in five abattoirs killing cows, pigs, goats and sheep now have CCTV. "(Meikle, 2011, np)

These investigations have generated significant negative publicity and lost earnings. In response, powerful organisations involved in the animal abuse industry are making increasingly desperate attempts to further criminalise these forms of direct action. In addition to branding animal and environmentalist activists as terrorists, or eco-terrorists, a raft of punitive laws to prevent these accusing truths have been forthcoming. In the USA -, for example, this included the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA) in 2006, and more recently the so-called "Ag-gag" laws (for a detailed critique of the ag-gag law, see Rasmussen, 2015). Essentially these laws are "designed to penalise investigative reporters who explore conditions on industrial agriculture operations.... It should come as no surprise to learn that the source of the pressure behind ag gag laws is, of course, industrial agriculture" (Smith, 2012). With support for these laws being found in other countries, including Australia, the reality is, that animal activists and the use of non-violent acts of direct action are truly under siege (see Potter, 2012). Against this background, it is imperative that more (animal) geographers engage with these matters seriously, and offer their voice and work in support and solidarity where possible.

Critical Animal Geographies and vegan praxis

Before concluding I want to emphasise - as all CAS scholars do (Twine, 2010) - the importance of an ethical vegan praxis. It is important to understand that critical veganism, and vegan praxis, embodies *far more* than just personal consumptive or lifestyle choices. As Harper (2010:5-6) argues,

Practitioners of veganism abstain from animal consumption (dietary and non-dietary). However, the culture of veganism itself is not a monolith and is composed of many different subcultures and philosophies throughout the world, ranging from punk strict vegans for animal

rights, to people who are dietary vegans for personal health reasons, to people who practice veganism for religious and spiritual reasons.... Veganism is not just about the abstinence of animal consumption; it is about the ongoing struggle to produce socio-spatial epistemologies of consumption that lead to cultural and spatial change.

Writing before the word "vegan" had been invented, Reclus (2013, p. 161) spoke of embracing "the principle of vegetarianism" as a response to the ugliness of animal abuse, and a means of becoming beautiful. For critical animal scholars, there is a constant need to pay attention to our own (personal) praxis, and recognise the need for consistency between means and ends: not contribute to those systems of domination that we write (or speak) against in our work. This is in many ways an important form of direct action, not least as it both embodies critical animal theory *and* confronts and transforms dominant human-animal binaries and speciesist hierarchies. For Torres (2007, p. 130) "Anarchist or not, anyone concerned about the cruelty animals experience at human hands should take the first and immediate step to stem that suffering by going vegan." Though, as always, the critical animal anarchist geographer would also be ever mindful of the complex commonalities of oppression.

Vegan praxis must incorporate a discourse and affect that reflect not only animal liberation but also total liberation. Vegan praxis must be orientated toward challenging all oppressive power structures... A vegan praxis, ideally, is an ever-changing way of understanding and relating to oneself and all other beings based on empathy, authenticity, reciprocity, justice and integrity – the principles that underscore true freedom (Weitzenfeld and Joy, 2014, p. 25).

Similarly, in a later addendum to Dominick's (1997, p. 21) highly influential paper on veganism and anarchism he notes:

I'm the first to be disgusted by those stodgy radicals, mostly of the "old school," who proclaim lifestyle changes must, at the very least, take a back seat to the "real" work of social change, which is limited to the restructuring of social institutions. Still, their critique of those who, on the opposite end, believe personal change will actually be the revolution when practiced on a large scale, is rather important. We must avoid either extreme.... (T)he simple act of changing one's lifestyle, even when joined by millions of others, cannot change the world, the social structures of which were handcrafted by elites to serve their own interests."

Where possible, it is this richer, more radical and integrated appreciation of vegan praxis - which is far more than consumption choices - that a critical animal geography sensibility should encourage and

work toward. In so many ways this approach has the potential to help usher in new and important counter hegemonic spaces of resistance: spaces of resistance created through embracing a politics of peace and non-violence. Two excellent examples that illustrate the tensions between theory and practice in food-activism movements, namely the transnational Food Not Bombs network and UK-based Nottingham Vegan Campaigns, are discussed in this book by Giraud (2015).

Critical Animal Geography, CAS and anarchist praxis: some final thoughts

We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented... Sometimes we must interfere." Elie Wiesel (1986)

The call for new critical sites of resistance and counter-hegemonic spaces with which to address the animal plight in contemporary society is desperately urgent. To these ends this chapter has sought to encourage more animal geographers to seek inspiration from, and embed their future research clearly within, anarchist praxis and the related field of Critical Animal Studies. Being inspired by anarchist praxis in particular, and responding to its unique commitment to challenging multiple sites of oppression, placing great emphasis on intersectionality, non-violent strategies of resistance, and a vegan praxis, promises to usher in exciting new synergies not only within the various branches of geography, but between other academic disciplines, as well as activist and wider public circles. Of course, there are significant gaps in the anarchist and CAS literature that should be addressed, not least those that address the domination and exploitation within and between species as a means of further problematizing human power and human species identity. Recognising the commonality of oppression, a politics of total liberation – of humans, nonhuman animals, and the earth – should be kept in mind at all times. A critical focus on nonhuman animal question must not be seen as either indulgent, or of secondary interest to the many important "human problems" that geographers are engaged with. As Ryder (2000, p. 1) argued: "The struggle against speciesism is not a side-show; it is one of the main arenas of moral and psychological change in the world today. It is part of a new and enlarged vision of peace and happiness."

It is one thing to write about critical animal geography inspired by anarchist lines of flight; it is another thing to put this into practice. Encouraging new networks of solidarity and support to gain traction may be frustratingly slow, even in the *critical* spaces where we could rightly expect it to be strongest. Certainly, constructing necessary bridges across academic, activist and wider communities to help further liberate (other) animals from the human hells they suffer will be built on a remarkable level of commitment, patience, tolerance and respect. For the future of animal geography, my hope is that Reclus's transformative call to become beautiful ourselves, both in our relations with each other and with other animals, comes to define the very heart and spirit of a *critical* animal geography. The belief and expectation that this future will be possible, enactable and achievable prevails.

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