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Towards A Framework For Reproductive Violence”

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“Towards A Framework
For Reproductive
Violence”

By: Caitlin Kelty-Huber

Introduction: Ecofeminism and the Gender-Based Suffering of Farmed Animals

“Cows are the victims of rape, but feminists ignore them.” (Cusack, 2013:25). This charge by Carmen M. Cusack is nothing new to vegetarian-ecofeminists (henceforth, “ecofeminists”) (2013: 25). Since the inception of ecofeminist discourse in the 1970’s, ecofeminists and feminists alike have been divided on their stances toward the ethics of consuming the bodies and by-products of other animals. A powerful cohort of ecofeminists, in part comprised by such scholars as Marti Kheel, Lori Gruen, Greta Gaard, and Carol J. Adams, have done a tremendous amount of work to situate a concern for more-than-human animals within ecofeminism and beyond. Unfortunately, as Cusack highlights, feminism’s failure to both recognize the parallel oppression of “dairy” cows and female farmed animals, and to thoughtfully incorporate that knowledge into feminist praxis has yet to be resolved.

Why has ecofeminism failed to situate female farmed animals into the concern of feminists and other animal advocates? Cusack suggests that, “In the past, ecofeminists, who have made connections between the abuse of animals and the abuse of women, have tended either to criticize meat more than dairy or focus on nonfeminists’ abuse of animals.”, thus her essay deals explicitly with the sexual violence endured by cows in the dairy industry (2013:26). Other ecofeminists have recently echoed these sentiments; for instance, patrice jones describing her and her partners choice to focus on dairy cows on their farmed animal sanctuary writes “...dairy, which we felt to be a particularly grievous intersection of sexism and speciesism... which neither feminists nor animal advocates were attending [to] sufficiently.” (2014:22). After surveying much of the prominent scholarship from the last 25 or so years, I would have to agree that ecofeminists have put more of an outward focus on the “meat” industry. However, a discussion of the brutality inherent to “feminized protein” has been a long recurring conversation embedded

within ecofeminist discourses (Adams, 1990: 112). It occurred to me that perhaps the sheer popularity of texts like Carol J. Adams *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990), which exists without a balancing “The Sexual Politics of Eggs, Milk and Mothers” so to speak, leaves a tangible gap to those outside of ecofeminism in regards to ecofeminist theory.

Previously, ecofeminists have tended to spend a great amount of time on descriptive analyses of such suffering. Hence, the way in which Lori Gruen wrote in detail about the physical and mental suffering of female “dairy” cows, sows and egg laying hens in 1993 is in many ways verbatim to the discussion made by Marti Kheel in 2008, Lisa Kemmerer in 2011, and Carmen M. Cusack in 2013. I do not mean to imply there is anything “lesser” about continually describing the treatment of these other animals; obviously, this is an incredibly productive and necessary part of writing about these issues and the foundation of teaching others about the reality of farmed animal’s lives. Moreover, since a consideration for female farmed animals is still lacking, it is clear that these types of descriptive analyses are still called for. The style of this paper is in keeping with this tradition, as there is no other way of establishing this framework without citing examples of what each component of reproductive violence entails.

Defining Reproductive Violence

Alternately referred to as “sexual violence,” or “sexual slavery,” I put forward that the terminology “reproductive violence” best captures the systematic exploitation; physical and mental violence, and trauma experienced by female farmed animals. This violence is gender-specific, inflicted on individuals who have the capacity to bear and raise children. Female farmed animals face many other forms of physical and mental violence, especially within the industrial

animal agriculture complex; however, this framework only attempts to outline violence experienced by female animals in an attempt to control their reproductive systems and progeny.

Reproductive violence is not caused by one particular actor or action; reproductive violence is comprised of a number of diverse, intersecting, multi-faceted components, which may or may not affect any one particular individual. I do not propose that the components discussed here are the only components which female farmed animal suffer; indeed, it will continue to be the job of ecofeminists and others to tweak this framework till it is sufficiently all-encompassing. Additionally, the components of reproductive violence are not listed here in a manner such as to imply a ranking of the suffering of female farmed animals. Such suffering is unquantifiable from a human perspective, and would most likely vary so greatly on an individual by individual basis that any attempt to rank these components would be both futile and insensitive.

Numerating the Components of Reproductive Violence

For the purposes of this paper, based upon previous ecofeminist scholarship, I have identified four multi-pronged components of reproductive violence: 1) Rape and “nonconsensual insemination” (Cusack, 2014: 30); 2) forced heterosexuality and projecting/enforcing human gender roles upon individuals; 3) psychological trauma from pre-mature mother/child separation and/or child death; 4) Health issues as a result of sexual exploitation. I shall examine each component individually with the goal of demonstrating how each category of abuse may impact different species.

The goal of this paper is not to exhaustively numerate the many examples of each components of reproductive violence for every single species of farmed animals. As I have previously mentioned, with the exception of forced heterosexuality and human gender roles, this has all been written on extensively by ecofeminists and animal rights authors, and is widely and easily obtainable. However, it may be said that these types of trauma are not often recognized outside of ecofeminism as gender-based violence; even within ecofeminism reproductive violence has not historically been given a platform devoted completely to itself. Instead, when reproductive violence is described and analyzed, it is commonly relegated as a secondary topic situated within a broader discussion.

By drawing together ecofeminism's classic theories with emerging perspectives, this framework of reproductive violence will be useful in four distinct ways: firstly, it will clearly articulate and reiterate the long held thoughts on the subject from ecofeminist scholars, making sure to credit this field of study as the first to make reproductive violence a priority. Secondly, it will allow a useful shorthand within ecofeminism and overlapping disciplines which describes the elements of reproductive violence without having to go into deep descriptive analysis. Thirdly, it will be specific enough to accurately describe the experiences of the individual, while still being defined broadly enough to encapsulate these experiences across species membership. In so doing, the framework will be equipped to extend beyond the realm of so called "animal husbandry", into any institution that deals with the "breeding" or harvesting of the sexual-by products of other animals. Fourthly, the framework is designed to be as straightforward and accessible as possible, so that it may be used widely by activists and the social movements that they are involved with. Clearly, this is the first inception of the framework, and will therefore likely need to be redrawn or tweaked by ecofeminists. However, the strength of the framework

lies in these four aspirations; as such, any revisions should be made toward these ends.

Notes on Terminology: Ecofeminism

The title “Ecofeminist” can be a bit nebulous. Broadly and very simply, ecofeminists may be described as sharing a simultaneous concern for the treatment of women, other animals and the environment based upon a shared history of oppression under patriarchal control, which has often deliberately conflated one with the other (for instance, the historical subjugation of women on the grounds that they are more “animalistic”, less rational, and therefore “closer” to nature than men; hence less deserving of rights and consideration). Underneath this banner, ecofeminists differ in the areas where they focus their concern, and upon how that concern drives their sense of praxis. In this paper, when referring to ecofeminists, I am explicitly referring to those intersectional scholars whom “...have further broadened this analysis from a focus on the parallel *situations* of “women” and “nature” to an emphasis on the shared *ideologies* that support multiple forms of domination, including those based on race, class, age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.” (Kheel, 2008: 208).

Additionally, a concern for other species and the ramifications of speciesism for other animals and humans further distinguishes “vegetarian-ecofeminist” theory. These ecofeminists have historically used the term “vegetarian” in its truest definition: they do not consume, wear or otherwise use any products that were derived from other animals’ bodies. In the past, some ecofeminists have chosen to use “vegetarian” as a modifier to detonate their choice to reject the bodily-products of other animals from their diets. This dietary choice is seen as a natural extension of their ethics and scholarship. Today the term veganism has quite arguably supplanted vegetarian among ecofeminists and the social movements connected to ecofeminism, as referring

to a non-animal product diet. Vegetarianism, which has the implication of eschewing meat but continuing to consume eggs and dairy, generally, is not considered as a proactive enough approach to ecofeminist praxis. Hence, Richard Twine notes, "...an ecofeminist arguing today for ovo-lacto vegetarianism would suffer from a credibility problem." (2014:206). It is unfortunate that the way these terms have been used by ecofeminists in the past may be confusing to those trying to understand ecofeminist theory today. However, there have been moves made by ecofeminists in recent years to clarify these semantics; this paper follows one such ecofeminist's lead by simply identifying the vegan-ecofeminists discussed in these pages as "ecofeminist" (Kheel, 2008).

Other-Than-Human Animals

This paper also follow in the footsteps of recent ecofeminist writing by choosing to use the terms "other-than-human animals," "other animals" or "farmed animals" throughout the entire paper when referring to these individuals and groups. I believe that it is worth the linguistic risk of sounding too wordy or redundant to retain these modifiers to the term "animal." If the goal of those who write about the issues inherent in human relations with other animals is to relocate the human from an exhausted position of dominance over other animals, then we need to eliminate terminology which syntactically reinforces this fallacy.

The Framework of Reproductive Violence

Component One: Rape and "Nonconsensual Insemination"

Carmen M. Cusack has provided ecofeminism with a critically important discussion as to why the term "rape" most accurately describes the experiences of female farmed animals (2013).

According to Cusack, speciesist attitudes concerning other-than-human animals prevent these individuals from being considered victims of rape even though the abuse they endure literally falls under the FBI's legal definition of rape (30). Cusack notes that the Federal Bureau of Investigations defines rape as, "[t]he penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim" (FBI, 2012)" (30). This, as Cusack argues, is precisely what happens in the process of "nonconsensual insemination" (30). As she describes, during the insemination of dairy cows, industry workers insert their arm up to the elbow into a cow's rectum so that they may manipulate the cow's vagina and uterus "through the rectal wall" (27). They then place the inseminator inside of the cow's vagina using both hands to locate the cervix; upon which they release the sperm (27). A similar procedure is used on sows. One hobby-farmer in a "how to" article describes the act of penetrating a sow's vagina with an "insemination rod" as "easy for a layman to do; you don't necessarily need a veterinarian, though it's always good to see it done first before you try it yourself." ("Artificial Insemination of Pigs," 2014). It is an incredibly cavalier and dangerous attitude toward other animals that sees an action as invasive as inserting an instrument into the vagina of another being as something so miniscule that even the uninitiated may do so without care or guidance. To combat such dangerous and despicably disrespectful attitudes, Cusack writes,

Since the use of the term "husbandry" is euphemistic language designed by the oppressor to express an acceptable context for nonconsensual penetration and insemination, the use of the word "rape" may serve as a constructive device to counter the word "husbandry." Where husbandry romanticizes and softens the brutality, the word rape conjures an image of forced sexual penetration. (32)

Clearly Cusack is right about the rhetorical power of calling an action which is so obviously rape, rape, and is correct to suggest that ecofeminists and animal advocates incorporate it into the discourse.

Again, Cusack makes another important contribution with the term “nonconsensual insemination,” which has alternatively been referred to in ecofeminism as “artificial insemination” or “forced insemination.” Nonconsensual insemination is the superior term because it rightly implies that the female farmed animals who are violated in the process of insemination have agency over their own bodies, and that the act has happened against their will. Additionally, as Beirne has importantly argued in regards to animal sexual assault, without a shared language it is impossible to obtain consent from another animal (Beirne, 2009: 115).

Of course, female farmed animals are raped without the use of artificial instruments or with hands. Cows and pigs may be restrained in “rape racks,” which immobilize them and allow for nonconsensual insemination (Jones, 2014: 14). These individuals may also be raped by their male counterparts (who are coerced into the act) whilst restrained in such devices. A recent New York Times exposé on the incredibly asinine conduct of researchers at the U.S. Meat Research Institute included the recollections by a staff veterinarian who was called in to help with a “downed” female cow who had been used in a “sexual libido” study. From the article “...normally you would do that by putting a single bull in with a cow for 15 minutes. But these bulls had been in there for hours mounting her.” (Moss, 2015) Both of the back legs of the cow, who was confined to a rape rack, were broken and “her body was just torn up.” The veterinarian was denied the ability to euthanize her (Moss, 2015). This last example also serves as an excellent reminder that when conceptualizing the sights where reproductive violence takes place, one must remember those individuals confined in remote research and breeding facilities.

Component Two: Projecting and enforcing human gender roles upon farmed animals and forced heterosexuality

Agriculture, including animal agriculture, is an industry dominated by white men. Just how dominated is it? Consider these statistics: in 2012, the U.S. Census of Agriculture reported that only 6.9% of all farmland in the United States is operated by women, accounting for a paltry 3.3% of sales; American Indians operated 5.6% of farmland, equating to 0.5% of total sales; Asian Americans operated 0.2% of farmland, accounting for 1.2% of total sales (the USDA actually notes that only 9% of these farmers were explicitly working in “beef” production, but that most of the high grossing crops were vegetables); Black operated farms accounted for 0.4% of U.S. farmland, and 0.2% of total sales; “Hispanic” farmers operated 2.3% of farmland, and accounted for 2.2% of total agricultural sales (USDA, 2014). Combined, this means that women and minorities operators only account for 15.4% of all U.S. farmland, accounting for an unbelievably low 7.2% of total sales.

Supporting this data the 2014 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that for the occupations “Farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers:” 23.8% were women, 0.9% “Black or African American,” 0.8% Asian, and 4.2% Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Bureau of Statistics, 2014). That means that 70.3 percent of managers in these positions are white men. Conversely, if you look at the statistics for all workers in the famously miserable field of “butchers and other meat, poultry and fish processing,” 23.5% are women, 20.2% Black, 8% Asian, and 35.4% Hispanic; all told, a total of 87.1% of the lowest status workers in the industry are comprised of women and racial minorities (U.S. Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

These statistics paint a blindingly white, masculine portrait of the animal agriculture industry. As Carol J. Adams has extensively researched, meat-eating and hegemonic conceptions

of masculinity have a long history of entanglement (1990). With such a dearth of women and racial minorities working in the higher levels of the industry, it is not surprising that the industry is rife with sexist and discriminatory attitudes. Even Temple Grandin, a relentless apologist and promoter of animal agriculture, has admitted that as a woman, working and being accepted as a legitimate actor in the field was very challenging and that she was met with great resistance (Grandin, 1995).

The hegemonic masculinity of industrial animal agriculture has roots in the earlier forms of animal husbandry. Patrice Jones reminds us that the very term “husbandry” is not a causal euphemism, but highly specific terminology which harkens to an era where women were the property of their husbands; indeed, at least in this culture, farmed animals have supplanted women in this role. Jones writes,

By becoming the “husbands” of farmed animals, men...arrogate to themselves the right to choose whether, when, and with whom the animals under their control will mate. Only by controlling every aspect of reproduction can people profit from the exploitation. Love matches are not allowed, and no animal may opt out of compulsory heterosexuality...Pregnancy means more property for people. They-the “husbands”- and not the mothers decided what will happen to calves, lambs, chicks, and piglets. Sound familiar? Yes, it’s patriarchy. Turns out that our ideas about daughters and “dairy” cows date back to the days when both were, along with wives and land, the property of husbands. (Jones, 2014: 140).

Indeed, men control much more than just the reproductive systems and children of farmed animals. Among other things they also control: when they eat; how much they eat; where they live; how much personal space they are allowed; what temperature they live in; how much light they are exposed to; men decided what body parts will be removed or mutilated; what antibiotics will be administered, and among other things, when and how the individual will die.

The gendered conceptions of farmed animals are also born out of hegemonic masculinity. Joan Dunayer was one of the first ecofeminists to draw attention to the way in which being a

woman was conflated with being a female farmed animal (1995). For instance, Dunayer describes how calling a woman a “cow” is derogatory precisely because we have been conditioned to conceive of cows as “passive,” “dull,” and having “something done *to* her rather than *by* her” (1995:13). Conversely, confusing gender with species membership has led to the sexualization of female farmed animals as Adams has famously shown in *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990). In essence, because farmed animals are viewed through a lens of human conceptions of gender, it is impossible to see dairy cows, sows, or hens as anything but mothers. This mentality leads to the wholesale oppression through reproductive violence of these individuals.

Finally, farmed animals who are born intersex may be at a heightened risk of death due to the rigidity of human conceptions of sex and gender. One recent example comes from the killing of an intersex goat in Gaza (NPR 2015). Intersex goats are fairly common: NPR reported that 1 in 5 offspring of naturally hornless goats have these traits (NPR, 2015). This region has a long history of consuming goats and their by-products; considering the frequency in which intersex would be seen in such a culture, local superstition has sprung up around the supposed “magical” quality of these goats milk (NPR, 2015). Under the auspices of “protecting the public”, the Ministry of Agriculture swept in to prevent the sale of this individual’s milk. Despite the complaints of the farmer who aimed to profit off the spectacle of the goat, public health officials campaigned and successfully petitioned for the death of this goat, ordering the subsequent deaths of any other goats found to be intersex, now and in the future.

Sexual Preference

The science supporting homosexuality and diverse concepts of gender in other-than-human animals is rich and expansive. It is, however, very clearly underrepresented in popular science and is thus conspicuously missing from mainstream discourses concerning the “behavior” and “biology” of other species. As farmed animals live highly restricted lives, both in terms of the actual years in which they are allowed to live and in regards to the extraordinarily oppressive environments they are challenged to survive in, there is less evidence of non-binary conformation among farmed animals in industrial settings. Then again, that may be due to the fact that no one is paying attention to, or is willing to admit, this perceived difference. There are some instances of homosexuality or perhaps asexuality that have been observed in farmed animals, and that have made it as far as the mainstream media, and that is where we will eventually arrive. First, as there is much evidence of non-binary conforming behavior in “wild” animals, those confined at zoos- and most obviously- among humans, I assert that there is a clear precedent for this behavior in *all* animals and that we may extrapolate that it is true of farmed species as well. This is where I shall like to begin.

According to Stacy Alaimo, “heteronormativity bias” among scientific researchers has stifled the understanding and acceptance that different sexualities are prolific among other species (Alaimo, 2010: 54). This bias assigns all non-heterosexual sexual behavior non-sexual implication; for instance, male on male mounting in other animals is often deemed “aggressive” or “territorial” behavior instead of as homosexual interactions. This bias also informs public conceptions on the sexuality of other animals; hence Alaimo recounts the pair of female hamsters kept by her brother: their “nonstop oral sex” “stunned” the family as there was and still very clearly is no cultural notion of the possibility for lesbian hamsters (56). However, as Alaimo notes, homosexuality has indeed been “scientifically” observed in a plethora of species. Quotes

from literature about the first museum exhibit explicitly dedicated to the lives of homosexual other-than-human-animals, Alaimo writes, “Homosexuality has been observed in most vertebrate groups, and also from insects, spiders, crustaceans, octopi and parasitic worms. The phenomenon has been reported from more than 1,500 animal species, and is well documented for 500 of them, but the real extent is probably much higher.” (2010: 54). Indeed, as Alaimo notes, works like Bruce Bagemihl’s *Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and natural Diversity* (1999) have extensively covered the “vast range of same-sex acts, same-sex childrearing pairs, intersex animals, multiple genders, transvestism, and transexuality” engaged in by other animals (52). While it is acknowledged or not, the evidence is there to demonstrate that other animals are by no means purely heterosexual beings.

Farmed animals whose sexuality does not conform to heterosexuality are not likely to have their perceived difference recognized at all, let alone looked upon with understanding or compassion. Instead, these farmed animals are nearly guaranteed to be seen as “defective” and as a waste of resources, which will result in their slaughter. One prominent exception which made headlines last year was the rescue of Benjy, a purportedly gay bull living on an Irish farm. According to news reports, animal and gay rights activists successfully petitioned to save Benjy, a male cow brought in to impregnate female cows on a small farm in Mayo County, from slaughter; activists negotiated a price with the farmer, and Benjy subsequently was released to an Irish sanctuary for farmed animals (BBC, 2014; Irish Mirror, 2014).

Component Three: Psychological trauma from pre-mature mother/child separation and/or child death

The psychological trauma that female farmed animals go through as a result of having

their children taken away, or witnessing their children's deaths is one of the more publicized components of reproductive violence. The intensive nature of factory farming means that the precious time between mothers and their children after birth and before weaning is cut tremendously short. For example, given the chance, cows may nurse their young for up to eight months; in industrial farming the calf is usually removed within an hour of birth. In particular, many ecofeminists have historically put a focus on the experiences of dairy cows, whose suffering is seen as "epitomizing" (Davis, 1995:193) this particular component of reproductive violence (a selection of examples include: Adams, 1990, Gruen, 1993, Dunayar, 1995, Kheel, 2008, Kemmerer, 2011, Francois, 2011, Jones 2011, 2014, Cusack 2013). Cows used in dairy production are routinely raped and nonconsensually inseminated for the production of milk; the industry treats their children, for whom the milk is intended, as a commoditized byproduct, abducting them after birth and branding them as "veal" or future dairy cows depending on their sex. The common reaction of bereaved mothers to "bellow", or cry out for their lost young is, as Cusack notes, so prevalent and "annoying" to the industry that "bodies of literature and schools of ritual revolving around the best time to remove a calf from a mother cow..." have been developed within the industry (28).

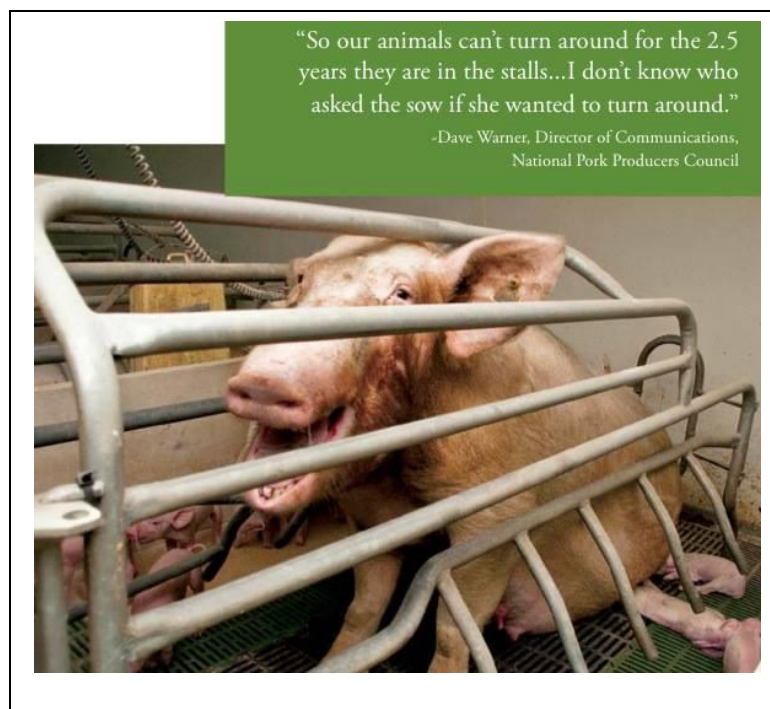
Other species of farmed animals suffer painful pre-mature separation from their young. Does (female goats) for instance endure very similar realities as dairy cows: they are routinely raped and nonconsensually inseminated for milk and "meat" for several years; their children are taken away almost immediately after birth (Food Empowerment Project). Egg laying hens and turkeys whose progeny are used for turkey "meat" production are robbed of the very special "two-way communication" that happens between themselves and their egg-bound chicks (Davis, 2005:44, United Poultry Concerns). Davis writes movingly of this absence from the perspective

of one chick, noting, "...the continuous interaction which they are genetically endowed to expect, and which they need- had not occurred. The mother hen's heartbeat is missing, and she does not respond to the embryos' calls of distress or comfort them with her soft clucks." (2005:44). Sue Coe relates another anguishing mother-child separation in *Dead Meat*, describing a mare giving birth to her foal at a Texas equine-slaughterhouse restraining pen. She writes, "Two workers use a six-foot whip on the horse as she gives birth, to get her to speed up and go onto the kill floor. The foal is thrown into a spare parts bucket." (116). The Humane Society of the United States has also reported on the prevalence of pregnant horses whom were bought at horse auctions giving birth moments before their own slaughter in holding pens; the deaths of their orphaned fous is practically guaranteed (HSUS).

Female farmed animals of all species may be slaughtered while pregnant (Vegetarians' International Voice For Animals). Information dealing with such things is hard to come across; however, one of the United Kingdom's most prominent animal welfare groups, VIVA, reports that in 1996 "at least 40,000 cows" in their last trimester were killed in U.K. slaughterhouses. One slaughterhouse veterinarian reported that, "Sometimes when these creatures are hanging on the line bleeding to death, you can see the unborn calves kicking inside their mothers' wombs." (Vegetarians' International Voice For Animals, par.8). There are numerous ethical problems presented by this information; one imperative question to ask should be in regards to the stresses of transportation and the pre-slaughter experience on the physicality of heavily pregnant cows, but also how these incredible stresses work to exacerbate whatever mental states last trimester cows may experience.

I assert that the focus that ecofeminists have placed on premature mother/child separation, especially that of dairy cows and their children, have helped spur anti-beef and milk campaigns

by some animal advocacy groups. This kind of suffering has all the trappings needed to draw an audience: it is visual, audible, and relatable, therefore one need not struggle to conceptualize this kind of trauma; it deals with babies, which is generally a cause for sympathy, and it is extremely egregious. Advocacy groups are also using social media to explore other mother/child separation trauma, sows being one example. It is estimated that nearly 6 million sows are confined in the United States, the vast majority living in tiny “gestation” crates, or farrowing crates for the entirety of their lives, hence a strong focus on their mistreatment by advocacy groups (PETA). I



recently came across a photo of a sow in such deplorable conditions- in a farrowing crate surrounded, but barred from her babies- being shared on the Facebook page of Vegan Publishers (above). It was seen, “liked” and shared by several thousands of people. In the photo, the viewer bears witness to the extreme suffering of a mother pig in a farrowing crate, the standard infrastructure used during the highly truncated nursing period in the industry. Besides the unbearable reality of this mother not being able to freely access her young of her own volition,

the two piglets to the back right of the sow look severely underweight, and very likely deceased. It is estimated that 20% of piglets will die of “stress” and disease during the two to four weeks of their lives that they are still in the proximity of their mothers (A Well Fed World). Besides dying of starvation; hypothermia; illness; falling through floor slats and drowning in the cesspools that collect waste underneath farrowing crates (Snider, 2011), or being crushed, Twyla Francois has written about another truly outrageous practice in the pig industry of killing piglets who are deemed too sickly or small. These piglets are “PACed” –literally, “Pounded Against Concrete”- by being “swung” and “smashed” into the walls or floors of the facility, often in front of their mothers and siblings (2010:62).

For the last several years in particular, sows and their children have been living through a horrific epidemic of monumental proportions. Porcine epidemic diarrhea (P.E.D.), which was first identified by the USDA in May of 2013 (Kehrli, Stasko and Lager, 2014: 44) has killed “millions of piglets,” and sows alike (Kristof, 2014). P.E.D. is a virus which causes “severe diarrhea and vomiting in young pigs” with mortality rates as high as “50% to 100%” for babies, though mortality rates drop with age (Kehrli, Stasko and Lager, 2014:44). Farms that can house hundreds of sows have seen virtually every piglet killed by the virus. Unbelievably, one tactic that farmers in the U.S. have used to combat the as-yet cureless virus has been to eviscerate dead piglets and “puree” their intestines into a slurry, which is then fed back to the mother so to “immunize” her from the illness (Kristof, 2014). We cannot know what the emotional toll premature mother/child separation, or witnessing child death means for female farmed animals, and most assuredly it does not mean the same thing for all individuals. However, losing entire litters in the company of other mothers losing entire litters, whilst sick themselves is sure to create a highly stressful, highly negative atmosphere for these sows.

Component Four: Health Issues As a Result of Sexual Exploitation

The unnatural confines which all farmed animals are forced to live within- like being stuffed together indoors on concrete or wire, or eating foods that are completely adverse to one's digestive system - are well known to create terrifically painful and often life-threatening health issues. This is part of the reason why farmed animals (are forced to) consume the most antibiotics of any other group in the U.S. (Romm, 2014). Female farmed animals are subject to these same fates, as well as host of other health issues due to the exploitation of their reproductive systems. For instance, mastitis is an extremely common disease that affects the udders of dairy cows. Lori Gruen provides a particularly good description of mastitis on farmed animals, writing:

One-third of all dairy cows suffer from mastitis... The most common mastitis is caused environmental pathogens that result from squalid housing conditions, particularly from fecal contamination. Treatment includes spraying the teats with disinfectants and injecting antibiotics directly into them. Both treatments are becoming increasingly ineffective as disease becomes resistant. The result for the cow is bleeding and acute pain, particularly during milking (which is always done by machine). (Gruen, 1993:73-74)

Dairy cows are also at a heightened risk to develop conditions which will lead to lameness, not only because they live on concrete for longer than any other farmed cows, but also because of the sheer size of their udders. Selective breeding has resulted in a cow who, with proper manipulation in production tactics, produces 20 times more milk than is necessary to feed her babies (D'Silva, 2006: 54). Unfortunately, as selective breeding on works to exploit a desired

system or feature of an individual's body, dairy cows are simply not equipped to carry udders so heavy, which often leads to lameness (Animal Aid).

Selective breeding for greatest “yields” in animal agriculture puts female farmed animals at a particularly grave risk of disease and death. Egg laying hens, for example, are prone to several different reproductive disorders including “tumors of the oviduct; peritonitis; egg binding (large eggs getting stuck and being slow and painful to pass); and uterine prolapse, a condition in which the lower portion of the oviduct fails to retract back into the body after oviposition, or the deposition of an egg.” (Capps 2014). Just to explore one of these common disorders, egg yolk peritonitis occurs when eggs become stuck or otherwise break inside of a chicken. Many eggs can become lodged inside of a hen; over time they will begin to rot leading to, as one can easily imagine, “painful swelling and frequently fatal bacterial infection[s]” (Capps 2014). The image below is what one vet removed from a hen suffering from egg yolk peritonitis: one pound of rotting eggs (photo via Free From Harm, 2014).

One group of female farmed animals who have been overlooked in ecofeminist concern are the those other animals who are used in industry laboratories when engineering higher yielding farmed animals. For instance, surrogate mothers, who are nonconsensually implanted



with a cloned fetus, may experience serious complications at birth. According to Compassion in World Farming's Joyce D'Silva, these fetuses usually grow beyond what the surrogate mother can accommodate, which often necessitates caesareans; overlapping with another component of reproductive violence, 40-70% of these cloned babies will die either prior to, or directly after

birth, and have a high incident of illness (D'Silva, 2006: 56).

Discussion and Conclusion

Clearly this is just the beginning of a process which accurately and comprehensively imagines what a framework for reproductive violence looks like. That being the case, nearly all of these components need to be further developed and supported. It is also necessary to take a critical eye to the framework to ascertain what or whom may be left out of the consideration it seeks to provide. One obvious problem to the framework is that it fails to deal with the reproductive violence experienced by male farmed animals; future revisions should see the simultaneous discussion of these individuals alongside that of female farmed animals. The framework should perhaps also be prefaced with a discussion that acknowledges the sexual violence that so many women experience in this country. Patrice Jones writes, "If we're going to make any headway on dairy and eggs, we've got to confront this directly. We've got to start talking to women about the sexist exploitation of female reproductive capacities to produce consumer goods that hurt women and children. We must talk about this explicitly, knowing that one in three women has been raped or battered, and may thus have strong or seemingly strange reactions to the facts." (Jones, 2010: 53). By taking a more sensitive and inclusive approach to the human reactions this framework may trigger, there is bound to be a more positive reaction to the framework's content.

I have struggled to decide exactly who the audience for this paper is. At first my goal was to write something specifically for an ecofeminist audience; however, I increasingly realized I was writing with a Human-Animal Studies audience in mind. Ultimately, while the goal of the paper

is to equip ecofeminists with a simple, effective terminology for discussing gender-based violence, the paper may have more of an impact on those who are less versed in this type of violence. Later iterations of this paper must make sure to carefully comb over each component of reproductive violence so that it is easily digestible to uninitiated audiences.

Reproductive violence is everywhere in human interactions with other animals. Animal advocacy groups demand, and even use their influence to require that our companion animals are sterilized; dogs and cats in the pet trade are nonconsensually inseminated and raped in ways nearly identical to those discussed in this paper; other animals who are used in laboratory experiments are repeatedly nonconsensually inseminated and separated from their children after childbirth; it is ubiquitous. Ecofeminism needs to work harder to incorporate these other animals into their discourse around reproductive violence. In fact, this is what I ultimately imagine this framework will be used for: encapsulating the suffering from reproductive violence in all other-than-human animals. This is a rather enormous project, but as I hope this paper demonstrates, it is a critically important one to engage in if we are to change the overwhelmingly oppressive relationship we currently have with other animals.

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