

BETWEEN THE SPECIES

Review
of
*Animal Oppression & Human Violence:
Domestication, Capitalism, and Global
Conflict*

David Nibert
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While Nonhuman Animal studies have been gathering momentum in the liberal arts, much of the literature is anthropocentric in nature and focuses on the human experience with other animals. Nonhuman Animals are rarely recognized as a social group themselves. While the impact of Nonhuman Animals on human culture is relevant, too often, the social sciences fail to explore the impact of human animals on other species. David Nibert's 2013 publication stands as one of the few works that critically engages the oppression of Nonhuman Animals. Importantly, his argument insists that oppression is intricately linked with the oppression of marginalized humans. Violence against other animals has acted as a primary incentive for the expansion of oppression across human societies and works to sustain and strengthen this growth. The horrific consequences of this conquest have only grown exponentially with the advent and globalization of capitalism.

No small undertaking, Nibert attempts to rewrite the entire economic history of humanity and its impact on other species and the environment. Elites, with the support of the state, have successfully whitewashed human history to create a story that both naturalizes and justifies current unequal social structures. This reconstruction has obscured the large scale violence against vulnerable human and nonhuman populations. Nibert singles out the process of domestication as the most important institution in the history of human/nonhuman relationships. Domestication, or "domesecration" as he calls it, is directly responsible for egregious suffering of Nonhuman Animals, women, people of color, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable human groups. Nibert's historical account is a far cry from the rosy picture of "mutual benefit" that is often applied to domestication. Domesecration is instead identified as both a major cause and a major aggravator of global oppression.

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Animal Oppression & Human Violence is a substantial contribution to the field of sociology and animal ethics because it offers the first critical, vegan-centric, intersectional and accurate history of human “progress.” Nibert’s work is not only relevant to historical development of oppression, but it is especially relevant to ongoing human and nonhuman suffering. The work explores the role of economic modes of production (namely capitalism) in dividing members of society into those who are privileged and those who are exploited to support that privilege. There is also a careful explanation of the varied socialization processes that support this irrational system, including, but not limited to elite-driven and state-supported “hamburger culture,” media, science, medicine, military, and government. Finally, the work outlines the disastrous implications for continued Nonhuman Animal use and suggests a number of structural changes of critical necessity to averting global conflict and irreversible environmental catastrophe. While most sociological research advocates institutional reform and a half-hearted reduction of Nonhuman Animal use, Nibert insists that the abolition of Nonhuman Animal slavery must be a primary tactic to alleviate suffering and social inequality.

Nibert’s publication is useful to anyone researching in the area of economy, inequality, globalization, history, social movements, and Nonhuman Animal studies. It presents a theory of oppression, but also a theory of liberation, and Nonhuman Animals are understood to be central to this framework. *Animal Oppression & Human Violence* implores academics and activists alike to recognize the long and sordid process of economic oppression and the liberatory potential of a vegan socialist alternative. This work is and will continue to be foundational to my own research and I expect it will be hugely influential

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to other scholars in the field of social organization and social inequality.