

Feminism and Husbandry: Drawing the Fine Line Between Mine and Bovine

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Abstract

Cows are the victims of rape, but feminists ignore them. Mainstream feminism condemns rape but ignores the connection between the sexual abuse of women and cows because feminist theory and law legitimize human superiority and speciesism. The law and feminists control the definition of the word “rape” so that it specifically excludes the sexual abuse of animals. Though feminist theory, which states that female sex organs should not be commodified or abused, could be applied to the dairy industry, the law’s differentiation between animals and humans allows feminists to indulge in the privilege of being the superior, protected class. Feminists can ignore other females’ sexual abuse and enslavement and enjoy the byproducts, e.g. dairy, because the law requires lower obligation to animals, and debates over the semantics of the use of the word “rape” reinforce that. Feminists should adopt ecofeminist theory because ecofeminism attempts to relate the exploitation and suffering of animals and women, while calling attention to the patriarchal attitudes embodied by the abuse of animals. This essay will give a detailed description of the abuse of dairy cows on factory farms, explain how bestiality law legitimizes sexual abuse of farm animals, and set forth important ecofeminist ideas explaining why feminist theory and praxis should extend to all females, mothers, children, vaginas, anuses, and subordinated victims of abuse regardless of society’s condonation of cruelty.

Keywords: cows, dairy, rape, sexual abuse, cruelty, factory farming, ecofeminism, law, patriarchy, bestiality, vagina, feminism, sexual slavery, milk

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Introduction

Many supposed feminists have been seduced by patriarchal privilege. These “feminists” behave as if they are superior to other female animals because they were born human. Feminists who consume dairy support a patriarchal industry that subjugates femaleness. Instead, feminists should acknowledge dairy as sexual cruelty and sexual exploitation and consider it to be a feminist issue. Female cows’ suffering ought to be a feminist issue because cows suffer gender-based atrocities due to their sex, fertility, and status as mothers. The culturally normative consumption of dairy products among Europeans and European Americans led to the acceptance and legalization of current animal husbandry practices in the U.S., practices which are rooted in patriarchy. In consuming dairy products and disconnecting the patriarchal oppression of women and animals in favor of normative values, feminists fail to see animal husbandry for what it is: rape and sexual slavery/trafficking.

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. I will discuss why the sexual oppression of female cows, which is unavoidable in the dairy industry, ought to be a feminist issue. This article offers unique insight, however, not simply in its critical view of feminists’ consumption of dairy, but in its consideration of the legal terminology of rape, husbandry, and bestiality. I argue that such a consideration can provide a basis through which feminist resistance to dairy can begin. In the first section, I will give a detailed explanation of what cows experience on dairy farms. In section two, “Queen Dairy,” I will consider why feminists do not embrace female animal abuse as a feminist issue. Next, in “Rape and Slavery,” I will discuss the terms “rape” and “sex trafficking”/“sexual slavery” and how they apply to cows in the dairy industry. In the fourth section, “Feminist View of Rape: ‘Other’ Animals,” I will argue that, because the law differentiates animal husbandry from bestiality, many feminists ignore the rape and sexual enslavement of female animals, contrary to the general tenets of the feminist movement. In the fifth section, “Feminist Concerns,” I assert how human rape and sex trafficking/slavery are feminist issues in order to establish a connection between a cow’s suffering and what feminists believe and practice. Sixth, in “Praxis,” I suggest that feminists ought to abstain from dairy and incorporate into their praxes their awareness of the established connection between human and animal abuse.

Queen Dairy

The dairy industry is directly responsible for the rape and murder of cattle (Matthews 2009). Veal is the culinary term for the meat of male calves, who are the byproducts of the dairy industry (ibid.). Ninety-nine percent of male cows born on a dairy farm will be starved, intentionally atrophied, then killed and sold as veal (Sargeant, Blackwell, Martin, & Tremblay 1994). Of an incredibly small percentage of all male calves, half will be bred to be used as bulls, from whom semen will be forcibly extracted through masturbation by a farmer. The other half of this tiny group of male calves will have their genitals mutilated, i.e. be castrated, and used as oxen (AIPL 2011). Natural, healthy calves typically nurse for several months after birth. However, ninety-nine percent of the male calves born on dairy farms experience one of two fates: they are either separated from their mothers instantly and killed within a few days, depriving the mother and calf of any bonding experience; or they are placed into an isolated and closed crate 3-5 days after birth to restrict movement and induce atrophy, later to be killed and sold as veal.

During their short lives, male calves are fed a milk-powder byproduct in lieu of their mothers' milk, even though this formula, coupled with their intense anxiety and social confusion, typically gives the young animals severe ulcers (Delft Blue 2011). On a dairy farm, milk is not for those who can claim it as a natural birthright (Welchmen & Baust 1987). Milk is for adult humans who demand dairy products (FTC 2013). Because of milk depravation, many male calves starve to death in the first 2-4 hours of their lives (Philip 2005). Their corpses, as veal, still make it to the market, along with their mothers' milk, and into the bellies of human children and adults who have long since been weaned off their own mothers' milk (PETA 2013a).

Most people in the U.S. recognize the cruelty of veal, and the domestic demand for veal has significantly decreased in recent years (PETA 2013b). Yet Americans continue to consume just as much milk, which is why there has been no decrease in the supply of male calves (ibid.). It seems that people have yet to understand the relationship between dairy and veal. There has also been a lag in the empathy felt for female calves as compared to male calves. Unfortunately, the suffering of the female calf literally breeds the suffering of the male calf. America's empathy for male calves will not prevent the mass exportation of the calves' atrophied, anemic corpses to

the global market if Americans continue to demand and supply more dairy than most other nations combined (ibid.).

Like male calves, female calves on factory farms are separated from their mothers immediately, just like male calves (PETA 2013a). Female calves are mostly fed a low-cost milk-replacer formula (ibid.). A female cow is identical to a female human in that she will not produce milk unless she is pregnant (ibid.). Because female calves are useless to the dairy farmer before they can produce milk, dairy farmers will reproductively coerce a dairy cow when she is about a year or two old (Vandermark, Salisbury, & Boley 1951). Every dairy cow will be repeatedly and forcibly raped (a term I will discuss in more detail in a moment) by humans using inanimate objects. The dairy farmer aims to impregnate her so that he or she may later steal her calves and sell her lactations.

Almost every cow goes through traumatic recto-vaginal rape (Vandermark, Salisbury, & Boley 1951). During recto-vaginal rape, the farmer inserts his or her hand inside the cow's anus and pushes into the cow's rectum until the farmer's entire forearm and elbow are inside the cow's rectum (ibid.). To an outsider, it looks as if the farmer is attempting to climb inside the cow through her rectum. The farmer then spreads his or her fingers wide to palpate the cow's vagina and uterus (through the rectal wall) until the cow's cervix is located (Saeng 2013). The farmer grabs the cow's cervix through the wall of the cow's rectum and holds it tightly (ibid.). The farmer then inserts the artificial inseminator into the cow's vagina (ibid.). The farmer feels with both hands until the farmer can plug the inseminator into the cow's cervix, which is being held by the hand that is lodged inside the cow's rectum (ibid.).

Farmers artificially inseminate their cows because they do not have nearly enough bulls since the majority of male calves, deemed genetically unfit for breeding, will become veal (NBC News 2006). Because artificial insemination is a standard breeding practice and the farmer does not receive sexual pleasure from the act, this nonconsensual penetration and insemination is legally defensible against allegations of animal cruelty; in fact, it is not cruelty against animals, as far as the law is concerned, that is the actual issue here, but the possibility of an erotic encounter for the human. If the farmer uses his hands to inseminate the cow, but does not experience pleasure, then the actions are legal (and deemed a necessary aspect of "husbandry"); but, for example, if the farmer receives pleasure while inseminating the cow using his hands or penis, then the defense fails and the farmer has committed the crime of bestiality. The defense

may stand even though the cow may be more harmed during the process of husbandry than by coitus with the farmer (Vandermark, Salisbury, & Boley 1951).

Of course, the law does not currently consider cows to be in the class of victims identified by the term “rape” (Beirne 2009). The word rape identifies unwanted penetration of humans, not animals: humans are the only species allowed sexual inviolability under the law. The legal distinctions that criminalize bestiality as cruelty are drawn to proscribe the farmer’s actions, not to protect the cow’s vagina from unwanted sexual contact. When humans are penetrated without consent, the law serves to reinforce the sexual inviolability of the human body, but when animals are penetrated without consent, the law considers the context, commerce, and quasi-property status of the victims. The farmer’s awareness of the cow’s displeasure during the process does not legally need to signal to the farmer that the penetration should end even if the unwanted penetration and insemination seem cruel. The quasi-property status of the cow dictates that the cow’s suffering is secondary to the farmer’s control of her reproductive organs.

Farmers, in fact, know that female cows suffer (Matthews 2009; Youroffsky 2009). There are bodies of literature and schools of ritual revolving around the best time to remove a calf from a mother cow in order to minimize her sorrowful bellowing for her lost calf, which is annoying to the dairy farmer (Apley and Hilton 2003; Chai Online 2013; “Cow Psychology,” 2009; Pirelli & Zollinger 1993; Self Sufficiency in Style 2013). Numerous scientific studies have shown that the female cow is literally drained of her vitality on the dairy farm, suffers from depression, and dies prematurely in most instances (“Get the Facts,” 2013). Female cows used for dairy die within one-eighth of their natural lifespan for reasons relating to disease and exhaustion (ibid.). The female cow is constantly subjected to the removal of the milk that she knows should be given to her missing calf (ibid.). It is unknown if, after the first year, the cow, who is maternal by nature, can predict that the calf she is carrying will be stolen (and in every case either starved and murdered, or raped and murdered), and whether this stress adds to her degeneration.

Most farmers milk cows twice each day, 365 days of the year (“AG 101: Milking Parlors,” 2012). Some milk cows three or four times per day in order to increase milk production by 10% (ibid.). Milking machines are routinely used, allowing about 16 times more milking per hour than hand milking. Four rubber-lined cups are used to pump milk from the cow’s teats (ibid.). The warm milk flows into a collecting bin and travels by a vacuum pipeline into a cool

storage tank (ibid.). The process of milking takes around five minutes (ibid.). When the cow is not being milked, she is waiting around to be milked (ibid.). Because cows suffer anxiety, farmers milk cows in the same order during each milking in order to routinize the process (ibid.). The routinization further mechanizes the cow. As each awaits her turn, she not only witnesses abuse inflicted on her relatives and cohort, she anticipates the discomfort that will be inflicted on her. She waits to be groped, tugged, latched onto, pumped, and voided.

Cows are prone to infections like mastitis, which they physically experience as a woman would (Natterson-Horowitz & Bowers 2012). Cows infected by mastitis experience hot, reddened, swollen, infected udders, and will also experience congestion (“Cow's Milk: A Natural Choice?: Stress, Antibiotics, Mastitis, and Pus,” 2005; “How Much Pus Is There in Milk?” 2013; PETA 2013a). Mastitis, which is present at any given point in millions of dairy cows worldwide, causes the cows’ teats to excrete pus into the milk, which will be sold on the general market (ibid.). Over one billion pus cells are allowed in every USDA approved gallon of milk, and one million or less per teaspoon (ibid.). A normal cow living a healthy life might be able to overcome early symptoms of mastitis through her own immune system (ibid.). However, the use of growth hormone to increase milk production causes the cow to develop larger infections, since the cow’s mammary glands are unnaturally large (ibid.). The cow’s natural immune system is unable to handle these sizeable infections (“Dairy Cow Lameness,” 2013; Grandin 2012; “Our Perspective of Lameness in Dairy Cows has to Change,” 2005; Shearer 2010).

A cow will flinch or kick when an infected udder is touched (“Dairy Cow Lameness,” 2013; Grandin 2012; “Our Perspective of Lameness in Dairy Cows has to Change,” 2005; PETA 2013a; Shearer 2010). The cow’s natural milk production is reduced, but the dairy farm’s demands do not lessen despite her natural protestations to the abuse inflicted by milking (ibid.). Just like humans, cows living under this stress often bellow, eat excessive carbohydrates, and become noticeably depressed; along with depression, a general fever may be present with mastitis, as well as shivering, rapid weight loss, and appetite loss (ibid.). It has become common knowledge that dairy farmers will administer high doses of antibiotics to cows in order to reduce the pus cell content in milk (ibid.).

It is not uncommon for a cow in a natural environment to give birth to several calves over her 20-25 year lifespan (The Destructive Dairy Industry,” 2013; “Meet the Animals,” 2013). But

as a dairy cow, she will typically become worn down and spent between the ages of 3 and 5 years old (ibid.). As a commodity, she will totally depreciate and will be sent to slaughter.

Rape and Slavery

The conceptual and legal restriction of the term “rape” to a class of human victims is speciesist because the term describes and is applicable to the experience of cows on factory farms. Though a clean parallel need not be drawn between human and bovine victims, an analysis of the definition of rape can be undertaken on behalf of cows because their vaginas and anuses are nonconsensually penetrated by humans. Crucially, however, humans may be the class of victims contemplated by the law, but humans are also the class of perpetrators who appropriate nonconsenting humans’ vaginas. Similarly, humans appropriate nonconsenting cows’ vaginas.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) 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). Because the terms for rape can vary widely, e.g. sexual assault, battery, sexual imposition, etc., the FBI relies on a general definition for research purposes (ibid.). Plain readings of statutes can vary from their case law interpretations. For example, South Dakota’s rape statute §22-22-1 limits the crime of rape to scenarios in which penetration occurs by force, coercion, or threats of immediate and great bodily harm. Yet, in South Dakota, case law indicates that the definition of rape can include psychological coercion (State v. Klautt 2009). This is true in Oklahoma as well, where the statute requires force or threats, but the case law indicates that coercion rises to the level of force (Okl. St. § 1114). In this paper, a general definition, supplied by the FBI, is relied on to demonstrate that, in its most general terms, the abuse discussed in this paper qualifies as rape, by definition, because of the class of perpetrator and the penetration of a vagina and anus, despite the species distinctions between the class of victims. The law is not merely designed to protect human victims. It is designed to punish human perpetrators who, without consent, penetrate anuses or vaginas using an object.

According to the FBI’s definition of rape, when cows are penetrated by hands and objects, they are raped. They are also nonconsensually inseminated by farmers (Cusack 2012b).

Nonconsensual insemination is, quite simply, a species/gender/sex neutral term that identifies insemination that occurs without the victim's consent (*ibid.*). Under the law, animals cannot consent to interspecies sex, which is one reason why bestiality is always illegal. Theoretically, even if animals enjoy sexual activity with humans, they cannot consent to it. Like teenagers, who cannot legally consent to otherwise enjoyable sex with adults, animals cannot consent to having sex with humans under the law. There is no legal recognition of an animal's sexual consent. Thus, animals can never legally consent to being penetrated or inseminated by humans (*ibid.*). One reason often cited for why animals and children, under many circumstances, are foreclosed from consenting to sex is because our society ostensibly protects vulnerable populations from power disparities involving sexual relations. Control and domination negate the authority required to consent. Rape laws typically explain that any force—whether physical, psychological, or situational—used to obtain consent or achieve penetration constitutes rape. Force is a dynamic of power.

Rape can be linked causally to patriarchy. Literature explaining the relationship between patriarchy and rape is plentiful, but one succinct summary might state that patriarchy, which is defined by unequal and unjust power dynamics, plays out in overt displays of control that result in vulnerable populations' submitting to sexual activity at the discretion and exclusive desire of the dominant party (Laura & Buchanan 2001). Despite the fact that the subservience of women and animals to men has been documented in history, in the study of language, empirical data, conceptual models, and economic realities, people generally refuse to analogize the rape of female humans and animals (*ibid.*). As Laura and Buchanan explain, "[t]o suggest that the rape of nature and the rape of women reflect as peers of the same dominant patriarchal socio-cultural tradition of the West is indeed a provocative claim" (*ibid.* p. 57). It may be important for feminists to recognize the literal similarity as well as use the term "rape" to describe the nonconsensual penetration of cows even if some feminists do not believe that human rape and animal rape are identical (Cusack 2012b). The importance exists not only in vetting feminist ideology and fortifying praxis; the recognition of a broadened definition of female suffering aids in unifying the feminist agenda and strengthening the front against patriarchal tactics. Feminists should argue for the inviolability of all female bodies, rather than condone the government's authority to dispense with a consent requirement in commercial contexts. If the rule were broadly written and feminists had to choose the side of protection for all vaginas or conditional and

contextual governmental regulation of consent for some vaginas, then one would hope that feminists would choose the former.

Rape, as an act of control, serves as a metaphor to connect the subjugation of femininity in patriarchy. The use of the term “rape” can move beyond the literal into the metaphorical and philosophical. The metaphorical use of the word does not lighten the literal use. The metaphor can add depth to the use of the term and another level of complexity to the feminist understanding of how the control of nature connects to patriarchy. In “An Ecofeminist Cassandra,” Francesca Reynolds writes, “[Women’s] capacity for childbearing, our menstrual cycles mirroring the lunar cycle, our patterns of caring for our homes, children and surroundings give us intimate connections with the earth and an instinctive urge to protect it ...[A] “superiority complex” has led man to exploit nature believing it belongs to him” (1989). Until recently, men have taken women and the earth because they believed that they were the possessors and everything else was a possession. Humans still take animals’ bodies and sexual byproducts because they believe that they can and do own them, and women who participate in this are participating in patriarchy. Lisa Tyler further explains the relationship between dominion of animals and patriarchal violence (2008):

Feminists can begin to develop analyses of violence and non-violence which show the connections among kinds of violence: violence against the self...violence against others...violence against the earth...perhaps even global, systemic, economic violence...This would involve showing ways in which patriarchalism underlies all such kinds of violence and itself breeds violence. (Tyler 2008)

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. Even so, the term rape fails to identify all of the acts of defilement, deprivation, and objectification present in husbandry, such as milking, starving, and killing. When feminists do not acknowledge the connections between the dominations and exploitations of female bodies and continue to use the word husbandry, which serves to distance them from their own role in rape and other atrocities and from other female bodies, they “alleviate their guilt” (Laura & Buchanan 2001). Even though these actions symbolically and literally objectify

the female anatomy and motherhood, feminists ignore such damage by classifying animals as “tools” for human pleasure. The acceptability of the linking, the acceptability of the objectification, and the acceptability of ignoring “exist[] because they fall within cultural norms that have been defined by patriarchal values” (ibid. , p. 63).

Ecofeminists, who connect feminism and ecological wellness, have long discussed rape of the land or of “mother earth,” which is a universal metaphor (Phillips 2004). The metaphor and the physicality of rape converge when ecofeminists discuss the rape of animals on dairy farms, and not just the rape of the land. Ecofeminists and feminists may use rape as a literary device and/or as a literal term. As Brittany Shoot insists, “[E]cofeminism is not a rigid belief system but instead incorporates many aspects of feminist activism under one environmentally conscious umbrella” (Shoot 2010). Though ecofeminists ought to be wary of hypersexual metaphors that restrict women to the role of flowers, fruits, or other overly sexualized depictions of nature, in this context, the sexual metaphor is purposive, and thus appropriate (Kolodny 1975). The metaphor can serve to fortify rather than disempower the ecofeminist agenda. Ecofeminists can use the term “rape” to metaphorically describe the destruction of the land. Pollution and the misappropriation of resources no doubt create subsequent trauma for the earth, animals, and people as well (Cusack 2012a). This would be a second, broader metaphorical context. But the rape of cows and women are distinct from the rape of the earth, and closely resemble each other, in that a vagina/anus is penetrated without the female victim’s consent (Laura & Buchanan 2001). During animal husbandry, a victim’s vagina and anus are repeatedly penetrated by hands and objects without the victim’s consent, and the victim is routinely nonconsensually inseminated for the purpose of achieving what results from the rape—a living offspring who can be sold, raped, and enslaved (ibid.). Thus, the metaphorical use of the word rape by ecofeminists can help to connect the abuse of the earth, animals, and humans, and simultaneously bolster the literal use of the term, especially insofar as it defines a rapist. Though the victims may change, the general infliction of domination by the “rapist” remains constant between the metaphorical and the literal female and across species of female animals.

Irrespective of whether feminists use rape as a metaphor or as a literal description, they ought to contemplate dairy as a feminist issue because it involves the intentional objectification of femaleness. If feminists recognize the rape of cows and the rape of nature as being similar to the rape of women, then feminists stand to gain. Feminists who recognize the patriarchal abuse

inflicted on animals and nature will have an easier time recognizing those same arguments that have been used to subjugate women (ibid.).

Arguing that feminists should focus on humans instead of on animals only weakens feminism because this line of logic must concede that a vagina and anus can be appropriated for a commercial purpose without consent (ibid.). Focusing exclusively on humans requires feminists to tacitly accept patriarchal institutions and settle for the victimization of an alternative vagina—the cow’s vagina. Any permissiveness towards the objectification of the vagina whatsoever can potentially weaken feminism. Feminists may argue that feminism is about women, not vaginas, but in the eyes of the oppressor, no doubt, women are oppressed, in part, because of the oppressor’s desire to control vaginas.

Feminist View of Rape: “Other” Animals

Most feminists accept animal husbandry and do not see it as rape. The vast majority of feminists, however, do not accept bestiality. Bestiality and husbandry, however, are analogous for many reasons discussed below. The main reason that feminists accept husbandry and not bestiality is that husbandry is legal and normative in that it approaches animal sexuality and reproduction clinically and scientifically, exploiting it as commodity and emptying out any possibility of erotic encounter. The logic behind this is analyzed *infra*, and I conclude that the logic is an insufficient justification for feminists’ participation in the dairy industry.

Bestiality is prohibited in every state either directly or under cruelty statutes. More than 60% of states specifically outlaw bestiality, but “[e]ven if a state does not specifically proscribe the activity, it may be covered under other aspects of a state’s sex crimes code or even the animal cruelty law” (Wisch 2008). Since, legally, animals can never consent to sexual activity (as discussed earlier) with a human, sexual contact with an animal can be considered to be cruelty (AS Sec. 11.61.140(a)(6)-(7); Gormally 2006; Hall 2005; H.R. 5566, 2010; Muessig 2009; Sheridan 2011; Singer 2001). This overlap between the quasi-property status of animals and the protective role that the government plays in both facilitating sexually exploitive activities that, as I have argued, constitute rape, and shielding both animals and humans from the possibility of erotic relations further calls into question how society draws lines between husbandry, rape, and bestial sex.

Utilitarian scholars, like Peter Singer, have argued that the act of pleasuring an animal ought not to be considered in terms of right or wrong (Singer 2001). Singer's philosophical argument lines up with that of the law in the sense that morality is not the underlying rationale for cruelty or bestiality statutes (ibid.). Following *Lawrence v. Texas*, morality seems to no longer be a legitimate state interest, or if it is, then this interest is weak (2003). Bestiality, which was specifically raised in the dissent by Scalia in comparison to human sodomy, is no longer regulated on a morality basis (Singer 2001; Wilkins, Christensen, & Selden 2005):

State laws against bigamy, same-sex marriage, adult incest, prostitution, masturbation, adultery, fornication, bestiality, and obscenity are likewise sustainable only in light of Bowers' validation of laws based on moral choices. Every single one of these laws is called into question by today's decision; the Court makes no effort to cabin the scope of its decision to exclude them from its holding. (*Lawrence v. Texas* 2003, pp. 563-564)

Bestiality is largely regulated by cruelty statutes. The state draws a bright line—humans and animals cannot engage in sexual pleasure together. Irrespective of whether it is an immoral “crime against nature” to give an animal pleasure, bestiality is forbidden. Despite what Singer may assert, an animal's apparent enjoyment, e.g. an animal's affection, turgidity, humping, or orgasm, could not equate with consent (Singer 2001). A domesticated animal or an animal in captivity could be coaxed, trained, or subtly forced by the need to please the hand that feeds. This dilemma is eliminated by the law, which is clear: even if animals desired to provide or receive pleasure, humans are not to conflate our relationship with animals with the erotic (AS Sec. 11.61.140(a)(6)-(7), 2013). The quasi-property status brings with it a custodial responsibility (one that, contradictorily, of course enables killing), which strictly proscribes sexual partnership between humans and animals. Questions have been raised about where the strict line begins. Ingrid Newkirk once discussed “making out” with a dog. Anecdotally, humans “kissing” animals does not seem to be where the line begins. Frequently some statutes discuss touching or penetrating genitals, but other cruelty statutes are silent. At any rate, the insertion of an object inside of an animal's vagina or anus for human or animal pleasure would undoubtedly constitute cruelty.

Admittedly, bestiality is distinguishable from husbandry in a number of ways, yet bestiality and animal husbandry nonetheless involve highly similar activities, e.g. nonconsensual penetration of the cow's anus and vagina for the purpose of creating a sexual reaction in the

animal, i.e. orgasm by the bull, or reproductive reaction by the cow. A crucial difference between bestiality and husbandry is that in bestiality, the effect is to conjure eroticism, and in husbandry, the intended reaction is mainly procreative. The law cannot outlaw feelings of interspecies *eros*, only actions. The law permits animal husbandry as an exception/defense to sexual contact with and hence abuse of animals (AS Sec. 11.61.140(a)(6)-(7), 2013). This exception/defense recognizes that animal husbandry violates animals sexually, e.g. requires cows to be raped, which is penetration without consent. However, husbandry is treated as exception/defense because it is “accepted” by the farming industry (ibid.). In jurisdictions where bestiality is specifically prohibited or where it is prosecuted under cruelty statutes, statutes frequently state to some effect that “[i]t is a defense to a prosecution under this section that the conduct of the defendant...conformed to accepted veterinary or animal husbandry practices” (ibid.). The government’s implementation of this exception/defense seems like bootstrapping. The government permits the exception/defense simply because the farmers who want to penetrate cows to cause a procreative reaction find it to be an acceptable practice.

Another crucial difference, which is intent, appears to be ambiguous, at best. If a man or woman contacts a cow’s vagina with the intent to experience pleasure or cause the cow to experience pleasure, then the contact is considered abusive. But masturbating a bull or fisting a cow, as described above, is entirely legal as long as the farmer does not intend to cause pleasure for pleasure’s sake and is attempting to turn a profit from the byproducts that result. In other words, any resulting pleasure on the part of the animal or human must be unintentional, while any displeasure on the part of the animals may be disregarded, i.e., would not constitute cruelty, as long as the contact that caused the displeasure is “accepted” by the industry (“A Report on the Accuracy of Net Content Labeling of Milk,” 2013). This logic fails to rationalize the government’s muddy line between cruel, nonconsensual penetration of a cow’s genitals and accepted nonconsensual penetration of a cow’s genitals.

Many feminists, like farmers, believe that the treatment of cows in this manner is acceptable, which is to say that it is not legitimately rape. Many feminists may feel that the rape of cows is not a feminist issue because it is not analogous to the rape of humans, even though the widespread rape of millions of animals for their sexual byproducts’ commercial benefit is not a reality that feminists should simply accept, ignore, or treat at an arm’s length (Brownmiller 1975). Feminists may want to ignore the analogy precisely because they believe that comparing

female animals to humans damages the feminist movement. But so much literature on the subject of patriarchy stands for the proposition that all subordinates are unified to some extent by their oppressed status. At the very least, feminists need to explore how this tenet includes animals. There may be feminists who outright do not sympathize with cows and will never abandon dairy for any reason, including selfish reasons (Griffin 2011). This essay cannot convince them to do so, and may infuriate them. Yet, sooner rather than later, these feminists may want to familiarize themselves with the work of Carol J. Adams and other ecofeminists before finalizing their opinions in order to clear their consciences of the possibility that they are participating in the widespread implementation of patriarchy.

There are feminists, who may otherwise be sympathetic to the suffering of animals, who choose to accept this widespread form of sexual enslavement because it is legal and it is “accepted” by their communities, the dairy industry, and the government. Perhaps those who are inclined to be sympathetic toward animal suffering just do not have the gumption to apply feminist philosophy to dairy and swim upstream against convention. Since the law and western culture accept husbandry, and animals’ commodification and exploitation is so widely unseen, it might be that feminists are not ignoring cows’ suffering as much as they are not making the connection or resisting the privilege and products that are connected to the abuse (Jones 2011). The reason why each individual feminist (and some ecofeminists) choose to distinguish between the experience of a female cow and a female human in practice is unknown. What *is* known is that feminists are aware of what milk is, and they are generally aware of how the milk in their yogurt, cheesecakes, and lattes is produced (ibid.). Because they do not know the reality of what exactly happens to cows, they cannot or do not make the connection between feminist platforms and bovine suffering. Since the law enforces female human’s superiority to female cows, and mainstream society encourages feminists to accept the privilege, then some feminists may not only fail to seek out information, but are content to accept the privilege. They may *a priori* denounce theoretical connections between humans and cows.

Generally speaking, vaginal rape, anal rape, and nonconsensual insemination are practices that run contrary to feminist values about the inviolability of the body, female liberation and equality, and treatment of the body (Cusack 2011). Typically, feminists also may denounce business dealings that involve duress or oppression. It certainly cannot be said that the

dairy industry has been cleared by the feminist movement as acceptable and lauded as a feminist mechanism. There is no popular feminist theory stating that dairy *is* feminist.

Feminist Concerns/Feminist movement against rape and sexual slavery in a nutshell

Since the 1970s feminists have studied, protested, and rebelled against sexual oppression that ranged from domestic sexual assault to the international sex trade. Marital rape rates have lowered, and the UN now pressures nations to conform to standard definitions and measures in the fight against sexual slavery (Alabaster 2011; “Sexual Trafficking Facts,” 2013; “Spousal Rape Laws: 20 Years Later,” 2000). Nonetheless, the list of abuse is endless: the average age of females who enter pornography and prostitution is 12 years; about 150 million women have been the victims of female genital mutilation; the trafficking of women and children generates 19 billion dollars annually; about 75% of the 500,000 sexual assaults annually reported in the U.S. are committed by someone that the victim knows; 90% of child victims of sexual assault know their attackers, who are mostly married or committed men (“Female Genital Mutilation,” 2010; “Informational Resources, Statistics,” 2013; “Megan's Law—Facts about Sex Offenders,” 2013; “Rape and Sexual Assault,” 2013; “Sexual Trafficking Facts,” 2013).

While these facts paint a sad picture of our world and the struggle that still lies ahead for feminists, the picture of the life of a dairy cow, as described in section two, portrays the general problem that feminists fight against and many of the same problems presented by these statistics. Yet feminists still pay for dairy, still serve it at women’s studies conferences, and continue to ignore the sexual abuse of cows. Using the FBI’s definition of rape, cows and women both suffer rape. Technically speaking, any being with orifices can be raped. If the word “woman” would be substituted with “female” in many feminist sound bites, then statements about the hostile treatment of the female’s vagina and forced sexual labor would still compel feminists to react and fight on behalf of women. If the concept of femaleness, sexual penetration of orifices, and reproductive rights were broadened a bit, then opposition to husbandry might easily fit into mainstream feminism. Such a broadened concept could also elucidate the reality that cows, who are mothers, daughters, and mammalian females, deserve the attention of the feminist movement because they are exploited in a fashion that compares to some of the gravest atrocities committed against humans.

There are those feminists who are so strongly speciesist that they would oppose the creation of any interspecies parallel (Hall 2005). Lee Hall argues why that parallel is drawn by the patriarchy and why it should actually be employed by those ecofeminists who support the notion that the treatment of cows is a feminist issue:

In an essay written at the dawn of the modern women's movement, Alice Walker described pornography depicting African-American women as resembling non-human animals and even excrement—connecting all three. Readers might have found that Walker's observations cast a disturbing pall over their personal lives as they began to awaken to the everyday distortions of human relations within a patriarchal society. In light of the connections Alice Walker makes, Catharine Mackinnon's comment that the human-animal dichotomy is only one step removed from the animate-inanimate division becomes especially stark. In our society, in which animals are widely considered food products, to see the sexual object as non-human is one step removed from the consumption and elimination of that object. (ibid.)

In the context of husbandry, where a vagina is used as an object because it is a vagina, where a teat is abused for profit because it is a teat, and where a baby is starved and slaughtered because it is its mother's baby, the parallel is both literal and philosophical.

Praxis

Feminists, who have, most basically, challenged patriarchal notions of proprietorship of sexual organs, should not only eliminate dairy from their own lifestyles and practice strict veganism, they should actively encourage feminist groups to eliminate dairy from feminist events, and strive to incorporate ecofeminist attitudes and perspectives into their feminist activism, praxis, and analysis. The connection between the abuse of animals and humans is so well established in ecofeminist, feminist, and criminal justice literature that an educated and eco-conscious feminist would almost have to intentionally avoid studying or discussing the connection. Feminist scholars gain little, if anything, by depriving themselves or their audiences of insight into the connection. Feminists should take professional, personal, and professional responsibility for demonstrating the global importance of abstaining from all harm to any animal.

Discussion of gender differences in attitudes towards animals requires much more study in the context of factory farming and systemic abuse of the bovine species. Feminists ought to get their hands dirty with the literature and analyze how patriarchy correlates with sexual abuse of animals and consider how greater awareness, activism, education, and praxis among the general population—and not just among feminists—can lead to the elimination of sexual abuse among cows and bulls.

Conclusion

The dairy industry is nothing short of the organized, large-scale rape of cows. The majority of mainstream feminists have failed to recognize this, as well as the connection that exists between women and cows. Feminists must not remain disconnected from the truths about “otherness” and patriarchy, but must boycott dairy as a part of their feminist praxis and politics. Failing to do so would ignore the ground covered by feminists that clearly demonstrates that patriarchal oppression is not unidirectional or solely existent in male-on-female crime.

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