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Thericide: Naming Animal Killing

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Abstract

In this essay I recommend 'thericide' as the name for those diverse human actions that cause the deaths of animals. Like the killing of one human by another, thericide may be socially acceptable or unacceptable, legal or illegal. It may be intentional or unintentional and may involve active maltreatment or passive neglect. Thericide may occur one-on-one, in small groups or in large-scale social institutions. The numerous and sometimes intersecting sites of thericide include intensive rearing regimes; hunting and fishing; trafficking; vivisection; militarism; pollution; and human-induced climate change. If the killing of animals by humans is as harmful to them as homicide is to humans, then the proper naming of such deaths offers a remedy, however small, to the extensive privileging of human lives over those of other animals. Inevitably, the essay leads to a shocking question: Is thericide murder?

Keywords

Homicide; invisibilisation; murder; speciescide; thericide.

Introduction

Slaughterhouses originated in the desire to render animals' flesh fit for human consumption. As killing sites, their humble origins were transformed by capitalist production and exchange, whose requirements led to new and large-scale regimes such as those in London's eighteenth-century West Smithfield market and Chicago's nineteenth-century Union Stockyards. The technological genius of these new regimes lay in their simple disassociation between the rearing and the killing of animals. Their massive expansion was encouraged by mass consumerism.

In many respects slaughterhouses today remain as they always have been: bloody, messy, noisy and stinking. Over time, however, they have become all but invisible, tending to be built far from human populations at sites that are both unseen and unknown. As part of this process of invisibilisation, their phenomenal growth has been accompanied by the invention of a vocabulary of euphemisms designed to obscure their aim and characteristics. The first task of this essay is to document this obscurantist vocabulary. The second is to counter its fragile hegemony by recommending a new and more honest name for those diverse human actions that cause the deaths of animals: thericide.

Killing sites

In 1663 the viewing of exotic animals in early modern Europe was transformed by Louis XIV's new menagerie at Versailles (Figure 1). Unlike other menageries, its layout for animal spectatorship was constructed neither for enforced animal-on-animal fighting nor according to the principles of a park. Rather, it was designed by the architect Louis Le Vau as the metaphorical expression of His Majesty's absolutism and of royal and aristocratic *civilité*. At its centre was a two-story octagonal pavilion. On one side of the pavilion an imposing door led to a single room: the royal salon. From his salon, without being seen, the monarch could gaze outwards and downwards and into seven enclosures. One of these was a dairy farm. Each of the other six displayed an exotic species at rest – 'a peaceful display' (Sahlins 2012: 243) – among whom were lions, tigers, wolves and raptors.

According to Michel Foucault, these spatial arrangements were a source of architectural inspiration for Jeremy Bentham's all-seeing Panopticon.² 'By Bentham's time', Foucault (1978: 203) relates in *Discipline & Punish*:

... this menagerie had disappeared. But one finds in the programme of the Panopticon a similar concern with individualizing observation, with characterisation and classification, with the analytical arrangement of space. The Panopticon is a royal menagerie; the animal is replaced by man, individual distribution by specific grouping and the king by the machinery of a furtive power.



Figure 1: Louis Le Vau's Royal Menagerie at Versailles

Source: Adam Pérelle (c.1670) *The View of the Menagerie from the Entrance*

Famously, Bentham afterwards drew up his diabolical inspection house as a technology of power whereby, with maximum efficiency and economy, discipline and control could be imposed on isolated human individuals in prisons, workhouses, factories, asylums, schools, hospitals and leproseries. In Foucault's heavily truncated account of the cultivation of a responsible citizenry, it was from the colonization and sighting of subjugated animals that panopticism emerged as an architectural principle. However, at the same time as Foucault suggests that in the Panopticon 'the animal is replaced by man', he altogether ignores the novel ways in which humans were beginning to exercise and vastly expand their dominion over the original inmates of the menagerie. At first, only a handful of animals was catalogued and characterised and made ready for royal inspection in the panoptic menagerie (exotic animals) and the dairy farm (animals used for milking and slaughter). But new tastes were cultivated. New regimes were invented and power applied at new sites of human dominion. Most importantly, animals in hugely increasing numbers were reared in or moved to invisible sites for their transformation into edibles.

As a site reserved exclusively for the killing of animals for food, the *abattoir* was introduced in the Napoleonic era during a reorganization of slaughtering and butchery that banned private slaughterhouses and mandated that they be erected far from urban centres (Vialles 1998: 15, 22-26). The intention behind this relocation was that, in the transformation of living beings into edible commodities, there should be a disassociation between, on the one hand, the killing of animals ('slaughter') and, on the other, the carving up of their bodies and the draining of their blood ('butchery').

Words and things/killing at a distance

The disassociation between the killing and the butchery of animals in France can also be seen in the emergence of large-scale killing sites in England. In medieval and early-modern England there were numerous spaces where animals were killed for food, both privately and in public. The social organization of these killing sites seems chiefly to have differed according to their location, their size and their degree of visibility. Among the sites were shambles, knackers' yards, slaughterhouses and individual households. The word shambles or 'fleshambles' or 'shamel house', first, is of uncertain origin. It has referred to both a mess and a bloody mess where animals' blood is shed, and also to a place where butchers kill animals and sell their meat (*Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*); it also designated stalls or benches on which butchers expose meat for sale (Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*). Knackers' yards, second, appeared in the late sixteenth century. A knacker may have been a maker of harness and saddlery for horses. Somewhat later, knackers became persons whose trade it was to buy 'worn out, diseased, or useless horses and [to] slaughter them for their hides and hoofs and for making dog's meat, etc.' (*OED*). A knacker's yard was the enclosed area where horse slaughterers conducted their business. The twelfth-century English word 'slaughter', third, originally referred to the killing of both humans and animals, often on a large scale and with blood aplenty (Old Norse *slather*, Icelandic *slátr*). *Slautherhus* appears in fourteenth-century Middle English. About a century later it was expressed in English law as a description of the site for 'the killing of beasts ... had and done in the Butchery' (1487, *Act 4 Hen. V11, c.3*), as also were slaughter-pit, -place, -room, -shop and -yard.

In 1700 most of London's population of 575,000 still lived either with domesticated animals or in close proximity to them. Quite apart from the emergence and rapid growth of 'petting' practices, urban dwellers often kept horses for transport and hauling and cows for milk. In their cellars they fattened pigs and kept chickens for their eggs. Barely fifty years later, the expanding production of animals as edibles began to resemble that of other commodities in a large-scale capitalist enterprise. By 1750 roughly 11,000 sheep and 1,400 cattle were driven each week through London's congested streets and herded into London's medieval meat market in West Smithfield (Dodd 1856: 90; and see Jones 1976: chapter 4) (see Figure 2). To the cattle and

sheep transformed into edibles at Smithfield must be added an untold number of birds, chickens, ducks, geese, horses and pigs.



Figure 2: 'The Last Day of Old Smithfield Market'
Source: *The Illustrated London News*, 16 June 1855: 217.

The forced insertion of these animals into capitalist production and exchange must have caused London's human inhabitants considerable discomfort. It is not too hard to imagine the sound, the smell and the sight of terrified animals on their chaotic journey to slaughter at Smithfield. Consider the dreadful din: cattle bellowing, sheep bleating, pigs squealing, ducks hissing and geese honking. Aggravating this fearsome cacophony were horses who neighed and whinnied, stray dogs who barked, whimpered and whined and cats who screeched. All these animals deposited a mass of fecal matter as they were driven along London's narrow thoroughfares. For a moment, also imagine how this unappetizing smell was exacerbated by heavy rains, for example, or when the terrified animals were made frantic by reckless drovers or by stray dogs (Anonymous 1849; Beirne 2013: 151). Having arrived at Smithfield, those animals not taken by buyers elsewhere were killed in undrained cellars, sheds and outhouses. Exhausted horses were slaughtered in nearby knackers' yards.

Of the numerous ways in which human-animal interaction was transformed by modernity, none is more significant than the new intensive rearing regimes. Spatially and linguistically, the strategy of these regimes has been, from the first, to conceal and to deceive the fact that they produce food from animals' flesh and transform their skins into clothing and other by-products such as fat used for candles and for glue. None of the numerous royal and statutory proclamations on slaughterhouses had as their aim a reduction or elimination of slaughtering. New rules were enacted to reduce only noise, smell, blood and offal. Blackstone thus recorded in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* that animals' 'stench' could be cause for actionable nuisance.

[I]f a person keeps his hogs, or other noisome animals, so near the house of another, that the stench of them incommodes him and makes the air unwholsome [sic], this is an injurious nuisance [sic], as it tends to deprive him of the use and benefit of his house. A like injury is, if one's neighbour sets up and exercises an offensive trade; as a tanner's, a tallowchandler's or the like: for though these are lawful and necessary trades, *yet they should be exercised in remote places* [emphasis added] (Blackstone 1765-1769, book III, chapter 13).

Spatially, a two-pronged strategy of invisibilisation has been at work in the development of slaughterhouse regimes: one external, the other internal. On the one hand, the massive scale of the animal killing has been and is deftly hidden from the citizenry. Tanneries, fish cleaners and slaughterhouses have been moved to rural areas or their sounds and odours otherwise masked in order to satisfy the pained sensibilities of polite and educated society. As Keith Thomas gently puts it, '[t]he concealment of slaughter-houses from the public eye had become a necessary device to avoid too blatant a clash between material facts and private sensibilities' (1983: 300). On the other hand, because of the division of labour within slaughterhouses, then and now, it appears that only a tiny fraction of workers participate in or even see the actual moment of an animal's death: 'killing at a distance' (Pachirat 2011: 138-139; and see Fitzgerald and Taylor, 2014). No publicity attends an animal's death. No one stands accused. No one is deemed guilty. Forgiveness is not needed.

Killing euphemisms

Besides invisibilised slaughterhouses, several other strategies have helped to hide the messy business of killing animals for food. For example, no longer do cookbooks recommend in grotesque detail the techniques for softening and slow roasting of the flesh, while alive, of eels, geese, ducks, and pigs. Fishes, hares, pigs and rabbits are far less often served at table with their heads and other recognizable features still attached. Ears, eyeballs, feet, tails, liver, heart, tongue and kidneys are less often considered delicacies.

Other sops to squeamish sensibilities include the abeyance of any vernacular deemed too coarse and uncouth or too close to the bone. The advent of modernity ushered in the renaming of offending plants and animals, for example. For plants, exit: 'black maidenhair', 'pissabed', 'mare's fart', 'priest's ballocks' and 'prick madam' (Thomas 1983: 83-85). For rendered animals, enter: 'beef', 'mutton', 'veal', 'pork', 'poultry', 'bacon', 'sausage', 'pâté' and 'terrine'.

The variety of ways that we kill animals seems without limit. Animals can be boiled, cooked, crushed, electrocuted, ensnared, exterminated, harpooned, hooked, hunted, injected with chemicals, netted, poached, poisoned, run over, shot, slit, speared, strangled, stuck, suffocated, trapped and vivisected. However, operating in tandem with the strategic invisibility of animals in slaughterhouses is the increasing elusiveness of their deaths in various discourses of lethality. Euphemisms rule here. Varying according to such factors as the social class of the hunters and the species of the hunted, many hunting discourses, for example, describe the dead bodies of 'game' as the 'catch', 'bag', 'yield', 'take' and 'harvest'. Specialty hunting often requires specialty language. Among the euphemisms for the killing of foxes, for example, hunters refer to the imminent killing or the moment of killing of their quarry as 'to account for', 'bowl over', 'break up', 'bring to book', 'chop', 'deal with', 'punish', 'crush' and 'roll over'. Heads of killed foxes are named 'masks', their paws 'pads' and their tails 'brushes'. Animals dissected and killed during 'scientific experimentation' and 'vivisection' become 'sacrifices', 'subjects', 'objects' and 'products'. Animals killed by the military are referred to as 'collateral damage'. Animals are 'humanely' killed and 'put to sleep' and 'euthanised' in 'shelters' under the guise of 'pest control' and 'nuisance avoidance'.

Some killing euphemisms do duty in different discourses. Among these are ‘cull’, ‘catch’, ‘crop’ – both ‘live’ and ‘dressed’ – ‘harvest’ and ‘sacrifice’. ‘Cull’, for example, is used by ecologically-minded hunters to refer to the killing and ‘removal’ of weaker animals in a herd or to police and ‘eliminate’ undesirable predators which threaten more desirable species. In this capacity ‘cull’ competes with ‘animal population control’, ‘artificial selection’, ‘nuisance wildlife management’, ‘selective breeding’ and ‘game management’. Sometimes, as well, culling or ‘putting down’ is used as Orwellian-speak for the killing of cattle infected with Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy. A harvest also refers to the killing of fish or to the number of animals killed, as does a ‘strike’. When the harvest is coupled with or intersects self-stated ecological practices, the killing of animals is termed ‘sound’ or ‘responsible’ or ‘ethical’ or ‘sustainable’. When human intervention practices lead to the killing of an entire species, such as happened with mammoths and passenger pigeons, animals become ‘extinct’, though ‘speciocide’ or, even, ‘genocide’ might be a better term here.

The recitation of these euphemisms here is not a prelude to some immediate moralizing on the wrongfulness of animal killing. Rather, it is intended as a step on the path towards greater honesty in how we talk about our killing of animals. My present aim, therefore, is to name the diverse sites of animal killing as theriocide. This I begin by juxtaposing how we presently talk about humans killing humans, on the one hand, with how we describe humans killing animals, on the other.

Naming animal killing as theriocide

In their approach to homicide most law and criminology texts begin their subject matter with a short definition such as ‘homicide is the killing of one human being by another’. Homicide: Latin *homo* (man[kind]) + *cædere* (to cut, strike, kill or murder). This definition is then illustrated with historical examples. These tend to be picked from seventeenth- and eighteenth- century cases in the commentaries on the English common law by learned jurists such as Coke and Blackstone. Next might follow an outline of the concepts of *actus reus* and *mens rea*. At some point, fine distinctions must be made between lawful and unlawful homicide and between one level of culpability and another: murder, manslaughter and further subdivisions (first and second degrees and so on). Is the -cide illegal? Did the offender intend to commit it? A murder is a homicide in which the offender has what can be known as criminal intent, malice aforethought or a guilty state of mind. Not all homicides amount to murder, of course. Some homicides occur in self-defence, others are accidental; and some are self-inflicted. Sociologically, it might be added, some homicides are the result of face-to-face interaction while others occur at a distance.

Within the forms of homicide, so to speak, there are twenty or so types of murder and manslaughter. Each is named in short form as a ‘-cide’ word. Most cide- words identify consanguinity between offender and victim: for example matricide, patricide, sororicide, and so forth. A few are based on role or status encumbency, such as regicide, tyrannicide and, more recently, clinicide and gendercide. If they are committed multiple times, some murders are then subdivided according to whether they occur in one place (mass murder, genocide) or over time (serial murder). Perhaps our ideal text will end with a chapter or two on murder in other times and cultures. Across time, a historical question might be raised as to whether there are more or less murders than there used to be. Across cultures, it might be asked why some societies have more or less homicides than others.

Nonhuman animals (henceforth, ‘animals’), however, are not typically regarded as ‘beings’ or ‘persons’ who can be murdered. In the past and up to the present, animals tend to be regarded in law either as mere appendages to humans not really distinguishable from Cartesian automata or as humans’ property and thus subject to the rules of the laws of property and contract. Animals are not ‘she’ or ‘he’. They are things. They are ‘its’. They are seen as lacking agency.

Animal narratives are it-narratives. Somewhat surprisingly, therefore, it turns out that there are numerous -cide words in our language that already refer to animals killed by humans. Among them are avicide, bovicide, ceticide and macropocide. Some of these animal -cide words are more aggressively speciesist than others. This is surely the case with pesticide and vermicide, for example, each of which also refers to a lethal mix of chemical agents and which, though their contents and objectives have considerable cultural variation, can result in arachnidicide, herpicide, insecticide, lupicide, muricide, rodenticide, serpenticide, talpicide and vulpicide.

Note that with just one word and without too much ambiguity, all those actions whereby one human kills another can be named homicide. Examples include 'homicide rates in Australia, the UK and the US are at 40-year lows' and 'homicide has been a daily fact of life in Mesopotamia since the 2003 invasion'. There is no such unitary term for the killing of animals. To remedy this absence I propose the name 'thericide', particular cases of which may also fall within the scope of 'biocide' and 'ecocide'. As it happens, this chosen usage of thericide arises in the good company of other recent neologisms, each of which expresses opposition to human dominion over animals: speciesism, misothery and animal sexual assault, in particular. In what follows I outline the definition, etymology and scope of thericide.

Definition of thericide

Thericide refers to those diverse human actions that cause the deaths of animals. As with the killing of one human by another (for example, homicide, infanticide and femicide³), a thericide may be socially acceptable or unacceptable, legal or illegal. It may be intentional or unintentional. It may involve active maltreatment or passive neglect. Thericides may occur one-on-one, in small groups or in large-scale social institutions. The numerous sites of thericide include intensive rearing regimes; hunting and fishing; trafficking; vivisection; militarism; pollution; and human-induced climate change.

Etymology

Thericide is the killing of an animal by a human. It combines the ancient Greek *θηρίον* (an animal other than a human) and the Latin *cædere*. *θηρίον*, first, is a prosaic variant of *θηρ*, which seems originally to have meant a beast of prey. Later, *θηρ* was extended to other animals, probably including wild and domesticated animals and metaphorical monsters. '*Cædere*' denotes the action of cutting or felling or killing. It is the source of the French word *abattoir*, where the felling of trees is used as a euphemism for both the rendering of animals to a horizontal position and also the site of their slaughter.

It is impossible to know with certainty when and where any given word originated. As a word, thericide has been used at least four times previously (Beirne 2007: 63, 2009: 17, 182; Nihan 2007: 407-08, 413 n.76; Schwartz 1996: 7, 31).⁴ In my own case, in 2007, it was inserted, vaguely and with little thought, into a critical assessment of evidence on the progression thesis: namely, the claim that there is a link of escalation or graduation between animal cruelty and violence between humans. My argument, which still stands, was meant not only to welcome the scholarly and activist interest in individualized cruelty to animals but also to problematize a widespread reluctance for investigation of those institutionalized cruelties where thericide is committed on a much greater scale.

Quite coincidentally, later in the same year, the rabbinical scholar Christophe Nihan used 'thericide' as his translation of the Hebrew phrase for 'wrongful animal killing' (2007: 408; and see Schwartz 1996: 7). Nihan's choice of thericide stemmed from his interpretation of the strictures in *Genesis* 9: 4-6 and *Leviticus* 17: 3-4 against the shedding of human and nonhuman blood. These rules entailed, on the one hand, that any wrongful killing of humans was condemned as homicide and subject to divine sanction by the Hebrew god Yahweh. On the

other, the judgment of an animal's death as wrongful killing – that is, as theriodicide – was limited to the profane sacrifice of three species of domestic quadrupeds: namely, oxen, sheep and goats (Nihan 2007: 407-08 and 413 n.76; and see Milgrom 2008: 1456-1457). (Interestingly, it is unclear in both *Genesis* and *Leviticus* and also in Nihan's and Schwartz's accounts whether or not the unlawful killing of animals was intended to be regarded as a lesser and lower-key derivation of homicide laws.)

Etymologically speaking, at least two sorts of objection may be made to the employment of theriodicide in lethality discourse. Purists might object, for example, that theriodicide is a hybrid and therefore inferior to constructions with simpler pedigrees. But stuffiness towards hybrids has been waning of late. None of us shudders very often or, at least, not for that reason, when we use words like television or criminology.

Moreover, two other constructions can also be mentioned: 'zoocide' and 'animalicide'. Against zoocide, first: on the one hand, though the ancient Greek '*zoon*' means a living being, including an animal – as opposed to a plant, *phyton* – the verb with which it is cognate (*zao*) is also used for human life. In other words, zoocide locks us into a Wittgensteinian vicious circle that ironically privileges humans. On the other, though it has the apparent advantage of being very popular as the name of a site where animals are used as objects of spectacle and entertainment, 'zoo' is overloaded with cultural baggage. The would-be 'animalicide', second, entails one of the same problems as zoocide: namely, that it refers both to humans and to animals other than humans. Worse still, animalicide would be an anthropocentric derivation from the Sanskrit origin of the word 'animal': namely, 'that which is to be feared'.

Scope

The number of other animals we humans kill seems limited only by technology and our own ingenuity. Among the major sites of theriodicide are intensive rearing regimes; hunting and fishing; trafficking; vivisection; militarism; pollution; and climate change. A very brief enumeration of the sheer enormity of these sites now follows. No prioritisation is implied by their order of presentation.

1: Intensive rearing regimes

According to the annual summary of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for 2012, the number of slaughtered 'red meat' livestock included 33 million cattle, 772,100 calves, 113.2 million hogs, and 2.18 million sheep and lambs (2013a: 6). For cattle and hogs, at least, while each year since 1950 the 'head count' for both categories has been increasing, the number of slaughterhouse plants has been steadily declining (with Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Texas now accounting for 49 per cent of commercial killing). To these totals for 2012 must be added a staggering 8,576,194,000 chickens, 248,590,000 turkeys, 24,183,000 ducks and an unknown number of other species, including geese, guineas, ostriches, emus, rheas and squabs (USDA 2013b); add also the production of salmon, trout and catfish in aquaculture and hatcheries.

To these theriodicides must further be added a significant number of animals 'condemned' by federal inspectors either pre- or post-mortem because they have been 'mishandled' in the course of being raised or transported for slaughter or at slaughterhouses or because they have acquired diseases in the process. Among the identified diseases are tuberculosis; leukosis; septicaemia; airsacculitis; synovitis; tumors; bruises; cadaver contamination; and overscald (USDA 2013b: 9-13).

2: Hunting and fishing

A claim commonly found on the Internet is that each year hunters kill around 200 million animals in the US. This assertion is not supported by any reliable data. There are little or no

official government data on the species and number of animals killed by hunters. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (2012), in 2011 United States commercial fishermen caught 9.9 billion pounds of fish and shellfish, and recreational saltwater anglers caught 345 million fish. To these numbers must be added the enormous number of imported fish and crustaceans.

However, arguably encouraged by longstanding anxieties about declining hunting licenses and revenues therefrom, some state governments have gathered information aplenty on the age and gender of hunters and fishers. By adding state-level data on hunting licenses issued in 2011, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2012) has estimated that, of the 13.7 million hunters who 'took to the field' in 2011, 11.6 million hunted big game, 4.5 million hunted small game, 2.6 million hunted migratory birds, and 2.2 million hunted other animals. Perhaps through licensed hunters' self-report data on the average number of animals killed per hunter, the total number of animals that they kill might be roughly estimated. However, to this number must at least be added the untold number of animals illegally killed by poachers (and for which the use of self-report surveys is quite unrealistic). Moreover, it must be asked: among the forms of hunting and gathering, should we number shoppers who walk the aisles in supermarkets in search of neatly-wrapped packages of animal flesh?

3: Trafficking

Trafficking in commodified wildlife may be either legal or illegal, with a combined value of up to \$60 billion claimed globally per year. It is widely estimated that illegal trafficking in wildlife is the second largest illegal trade worldwide with a value estimated at \$6-10 billion annually (Sollund 2013: 72; South and Wyatt 2011; Wyatt 2013: 9). Although the number of theriocides that result from trafficking is unknown, the illegal trade in live animals and in body parts threatens perhaps one third of the world's species. Some of this illegal trade might also be classified as forms of hunting and fishing. Peterson (2013: especially chapters 4 and 5) notes that the boundaries between wild animals and domesticated animals can present definitional difficulties. Additionally, Sollund (2011: 438, n.3) insightfully argues that animal trafficking should accurately be renamed abduction and kidnapping.

4: Vivisection

No one knows how many theriocidal procedures are administered to animals imprisoned in research laboratories: in the US 'somewhere between 25 and 50 million [annually] may not be an unreasonable estimate. Worldwide, the figure must run into the hundreds of millions' (Regan 2007: 118). But some animals are intentionally excluded from these sums. The US government, for example, fails to recognize rodents and birds in its annual estimates of animals used in scientific research (that is, in education, product safety testing and experimentation, including medical research). In the United Kingdom (UK) one estimate is that as many as 3.7 million experiments per year are conducted on animals (Sorenson 2014: 33).

5: Militarism

In-depth material on animals and the military and animals used in the military-industrial complex are not plentiful. Two recent exceptions are the edited volumes of original essays in Hediger (2013) and Nocella, Salter and Bentley (2014). Both books offer unverifiable estimates of the number of animals used and killed by the military-industrial complex now and over time and in peace and in war. The former book contains essays on a wide range of topics, including the militarization of bees; the use of canine soldiers by the US military and of 200,000 dogs by the Nazis as guards during the Holocaust; the ecology of exterminism (EP Thompson's bold term for nuclear cold war); wars of images, symbols and other representations; and the military uses of animals in zoos and animals represented on war memorials. The latter book provides an overview of the military-animal and industrial-animal complex, several chapters on how

animals such as horses, dogs and homing pigeons have been used and killed in overnumerous wars, and an activist thrust towards peace and the elimination of war.

6: Pollution

Theriodicides that result from pollution are ubiquitous and multifaceted. Pollution may occur through the generation, the transport and the disposal of hazardous, nuclear and radioactive waste. Pollution may infiltrate soil, water or air.

Oil pollution, for example, is a high profile and enormously damaging problem that ought to have become a rare risk by the start of the twenty-first century. Yet, in April 2010, the Gulf of Mexico and the coast of Florida were flooded by crude oil that spilled out from BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig. Until the capping of BP's faulty well three months later, the Gulf waters were polluted by 210 million US gallons of oil. Despite the chilling media images of oil-soaked birds, the long-term effects of the BP disaster on marine eco-systems and on coastal fauna and flora are still unknown but are perhaps devastating (Walters 2013: 140-141; White 2013). In 2012, after the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, the Japanese government banned the sale of 36 species of fish in which radiation levels were found to be especially high. Note that, while pollution is an endemic by-product of unregulated industrial production, euphemisms rule here as well: instead of catastrophes there are 'accidents', 'spills', 'leaks' and 'meltdowns' (Walters 2013: 137).

7: Climate change

The long-term existence of all life on planet Earth is seriously threatened by human-induced climate change and, in particular, by global warming. In multiple locations in the air, on the land and in the sea, anthropogenic climate change is recognized as a major threat to the survival of thousands of species over the next century (Cahill, Aiello-Lammens, Fisher-Reid et al. 2012: 1; and see Agnew 2013; IPCC 2013; National Academy of Sciences 2013; Warren et al. 2013; White 2013). At times, greenhouse gases have contributed to climate change through active collusion between powerful governments and corporations in a globalized world of national inequalities (Kramer and Michalowski 2012; Lynch, Burns and Stretesky 2010).

Currently, humans release twenty gigatons of carbon dioxide annually into the atmosphere (Royal Society 2005: 1-21). The short-term results of this greenhouse-gas pollution include ocean acidification, dead or deteriorating coral reefs, calcified plankton, and declining and threatened populations of larger animals. One somewhat contentious study has found that, given current trends of CO₂ emissions, 55 per cent of common plant species and 35 per cent of animal species are likely to see their available habitat halved by 2080 (Cahill, Aiello-Lammens, Fisher-Reid et al. 2012). The most at-risk animal species are amphibians and reptiles, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, Central America, Amazonia and Australia. The most publicized at-risk species tend to be exotica such as whales, walruses, polar and panda bears, tigers and leopards.

Interconnections

Their interconnectedness is a major characteristic of these seven sites. Militarism, for instance, intersects with pollution as a site of theriodicide. One of militarism's major effects is environmental degradation, including space junk, contaminated military bases, the dumping of jet and other fuels, overboard ship discharges, and the use of bombs and toxic weapons such as Agent Orange. All these activities kill animals either directly or indirectly by degrading or destroying their habitat. Militarism also intersects with vivisection. For example, animal experimentation is practised in the US by both the Department of Defense and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, (Sorenson in press; and see Singer 1975: chapter 2; and South, Brisman and Beirne 2014). Military experiments and military training exercises are conducted with the use of birds, cats, dogs, dolphins, ferrets, fish, goats, mice, pigs, rabbits, rats,

and sheep and – until quite recently – with primates, including 4,000 monkeys at the Oregon National Primate Research Center.



Figure 3: Union Stockyards, Chicago, 1947

Source: From an original unsigned film negative, 1960-1970.

Militarism intersects with intensive rearing regimes as well. While no procurement figures are available for meat consumption by the US military, I surmise that the roughly 3,000,000 frontline personnel and reservists must keep numerous slaughterhouses at work providing three square meals of meat and potatoes per day. Moreover, if Carol Adams' (1990) *Sexual Politics of Meat* is any indication, then the crude, in-your-face masculinities associated with the military are also an indicator of higher-than-average meat consumption per capita. In their turn, intensive rearing regimes contribute to pollution. Among the inevitable products of these loosely regulated regimes are disease-causing pathogens, such as salmonella. Fish, in particular, are at great risk from pollution spawned by slaughterhouse sludge. For example, in North Carolina an eight-acre hog-waste lagoon burst in 1995, spewing 25 million gallons of sludge into the New River and killing 10 million fish. In 2011, an Illinois hog farm discharged 200,000 gallons of sludge into a creek, killing over 110,000 fish (National Resources Defense Council 2013; and see Larkins, Gibbs and Rivers 2013).

The magnitude of thericide in these seven sites is hard to grasp. Some species are in the process of disappearing even before we know they exist. A proper specification and accounting requires that we surmount some difficult methodological and conceptual obstacles. As an example of the former: in respect of thericide in intensive rearing regimes, there must be an independent authority for enumeration that is not complicit in the killing process, as is the USDA (which is responsible for overseeing the 'humane killing' procedures of the *Animal Welfare Act*). As such, the use of USDA data to measure the incidence of slaughterhouse

theriodicide is not altogether unlike reliance on information from internal police department inquiries when the aim is objectively to measure the extent and seriousness of police brutality.

Discussion

In addition to its other virtues such as clarity, parsimony and utility, a good concept should encourage criticism. Not unexpectedly, each part of the definition of theriodicide can be contested. Among numerous issues, briefly consider just five:

1: In the definition above, the opening sentence states that '[t]heriodicide may be defined as those diverse human actions that cause the death of an animal'. A minefield of issues lurks here. To start with, who or what should be included in the class of animals? In response to this question, should we employ some Linnean or Lamarckian taxonomy or phylogenetic scale? There will be near universal agreement for the inclusion of all mammals. But what of invertebrates, insects or bivalves? Do plants merit inclusion?

At the forefront of existing conceptual problems is surely the question of which species should be included in any tally of lethality. Elephants, cattle *and* mosquitoes? Fish, shrimp *and* molluscs? At the moment, to the question 'how much theriodicide is there?' we arrive dangerously close to the answer 'as much as we would like there to be'. Derrida's advice on this conundrum: "Animals" ... I interrupt my nomenclature and call Noah to help insure that no one gets left on the ark' (Derrida 2002: 402).

Suppose at the end of this discovery process the lowest common denominator of animalhood is found to be sentience (the ability to feel pain and pleasure). How is this capacity to be measured? Some will perhaps want to draw a dividing line somewhere between a shrimp and a mollusc or between a mollusc and a mosquito. But, does it matter, in terms of what we call the swatted death of the latter – of *her? him? it?* – whether the mosquito we killed was biting us or not? Is the killing of that mosquito a legitimate act of self-defence? Possibly. If not, then are we obliged to grimace and turn the other cheek?

2.i: How long is the chain of causation? Theriodicide refers to 'human actions that *cause* the death of an animal [emphasis added]'. Now consider a package of cow's flesh ('beef') bought and sold in a supermarket. Suppose we can agree that a theriodicide is committed in a slaughterhouse when a stun gun bolt applied by a worker to her head kills the cow whose flesh is afterwards transformed into an edible. Whether we think such an act is socially and ethically acceptable or not is not relevant to the question of who should be held responsible for causing the death of the cow. Is it solely the person who wielded the stun gun (and see the comments above by Pachirat 2011)? Probably not. Is it also slaughterhouse owners? Supermarket owners? Transporters? Advertisers? Consumers? Similar lines of questioning about the length and the links in the chain of causation surely apply to responsibility for theriodicide committed not only in intensive rearing regimes but also in each of the other six sites listed above.

2.ii: Theriodicides also include those deaths where humans train and employ certain animals to kill other animals. These theriodical practices have been and are enormously popular in some societies. Among them are bloodsports such as bear-, badger-, bull- and horse-baitings; dog- and cock-fighting. They also include the use of dogs in the hunting of waterfowl, bears and foxes, for example: falcons for small edible animals and rodents; and worms and other bait for fish.

These theriodicides are rarely conceived and experienced by their human participants as naked cruelty or even as harmful. Rather, beginning with the emergence of sportisation practices in the seventeenth century, they are rule-bound practices that ironically and perversely specify codes of honour, etiquette, fair play and other civilities. They are legion in number. Among them

are ballads, poems and novels; pronouncements from pulpits; hunting and animal husbandry manuals; statutory and other juridical instruments; and the sustainability mantras and practices of many environmentalist organisations.

3.i: Should socially acceptable animal killings be considered theriodicide? In research where human-animal studies intersect the social sciences, especially psychology, it is a commonplace that analysis of the link between animal abuse and interhuman violence must proceed on the basis of what is regarded as socially unacceptable behavior. In this scenario the study of animal sexual assault is acceptable because the action is not; whereas the study of vivisection is not worthwhile because what goes on in scientific laboratories is for the good of mankind. But such distinctions are little more than speciesist positions dressed up in the respective vocabularies of value-free social science and utilitarianism. How and why some theriocides are constructed as socially acceptable and others as unacceptable must surely be problematized as a key object of inquiry. Dare I say it, but a killing is a killing is a killing, no matter whether it is regarded as acceptable or not.

3.ii: Argument about the morality of certain aspects of human-animal interaction sometimes inevitably leads to discussion of hypothetical marginal cases. For example, who may eat whom when the three survivors of a shipwreck – an adult human, the ship's cabin boy and a dog – are several days away from rescue and without hope of acquiring food or potable water? Most, but not all, moral philosophers would conclude that it is alright to eat the dog. Self-preservation is not akin to speciesism. (About the respective values of human and animal life, similar conversations can be had from cases in the 'trolleyology' literature, for instance in Edmonds 2014).

4.i: Can theriodicide be blameless? Can it be 'legal'? The socially acceptable answer to both these questions is: only if theriodicide is socially acceptable. But the strong language in **3.i** above also applies here. In particular, though they have severe consequences for those so labelled, of course, the categories of legality, illegality and delinquency are nevertheless manufactured categories with no ontological reality. As such, legality is irrelevant to the determination of theriodicide. Indeed, it is a matter of great interest why some theriocides attract the condemnation of law and others do not. Why is most theriodicide defined as neither criminal nor abusive?

4.ii: The object of anti-cruelty legislation is not always the welfare of animals. Historically and still today, it is human dominion, vanity and private profit that mostly lie behind these instruments (Beirne 2009: chapters 2 and 3). Why is it that the enactment of anti-cruelty laws is often accompanied by a massive increase in the number of legal and socially acceptable theriocides at large-scale killing sites? (An ironic postscript to the Benthamite project of inspection is provided by a petition from the UK animal rights group Animal Aid urging the mandatory use of CCTV in slaughterhouses: 'Installing CCTV in slaughterhouses would monitor workers to prevent animal cruelty, help with training staff, and record any instances of animal abuse for use in prosecutions': Animal Aid 2013.)

5: Consider, finally, that '[t]heriodicide may be committed one-on-one, in small groups or in large-scale social institutions'. In recent years it has been chiefly because of a preoccupation with one-on-one cases of animal cruelty, especially animals killed in the course of or in addition to other forms of family violence, that the topic of animal abuse has been propelled into public discussion. For example, it has been estimated that 200,000 roosters are killed in US cockfights each year (Herzog 1999: 175). These individualized cases where animals are killed for pleasure or in the name of sport surely deserve profound attention and condemnation. But we should be even more attentive to the fact that the vast majority of theriocides occur in large-scale institutions and at a social and geographic distance: silently, invisibly and with little recognition.

Thus, 35 million chickens were killed each day of 2012 for American consumers (that is, 60,000 chickens for each rooster killed in a cockfight), as were 681,068 turkeys, 310,136 hogs and 66,254 ducks.

Post mortem

Sociologically, not all deaths are equal. A homicide attracts more attention than a death from natural causes. Moreover, the death of a rich and powerful homicide victim garners more attention than that of a victim who is socially disadvantaged. More happens. The media coverage, the public indignation and the use of police resources all tend to be greater when a member of an elite is killed by a member of a social or racial minority, for example. When the disadvantaged are killed, their deaths are less likely to be reported to authorities, less likely to be represented in the media and less likely to be investigated. Less happens.

So it is, too, with the deaths of humans and animals in speciesist societies. Because the life of a human is almost always valued more highly than the life of an animal, homicide draws more attention than thericide. More happens with homicide than with thericide. Yet, in the time it takes to read this page roughly 8,000 animals will have been slaughtered for human consumption in the US alone. Allegedly for the offences of homelessness and aggression, there are between three and four million thericides of 'delinquent' cats and dogs in animal shelters each year (Humane Society of the United States 2013: 2). Because these thericides are regarded as neither illegal nor wrongful, let alone as *real* harms, they and most other thericides are not seen as newsworthy. On those rare occasions when animals kill humans – when they crash into our vehicles or when they bite us with poisonous fangs and large teeth and gash us with sharp claws or when they transmit diseases to us – it is *our* deaths that are accompanied by media attention, moral panic, medical advice and dire warnings about the dangers animals pose to public – that is, human – safety.

The societal reaction to thericide varies greatly. Influenced by gender, social class, religion, age, race, ethnicity, psychological and emotional states and a host of other factors, some of us react to the sight or the sound of a thericide with anger, outrage and revulsion. Most respond with some mixture of denial, indifference, embarrassment, pity and compassion. Still others experience pleasure and joy. Additionally, not only the amount of thericide but also the organized responses to it doubtless vary in different societies, different times and different places. Just as societies vary in their incidence and rates of murder and rape, so, too, some societies are more or less thericide-prone than others.

The otherwise unstated assumption of this essay has been that animals' chief and ultimate right and the *sine qua non* of all their other rights is the right not to have thericide inflicted upon them. Both in life and in death, animals also have the right to respectful treatment. Moreover, if the killing of animals by humans is as harmful to them as homicides are to humans, then the proper naming of such deaths offers a respectful remedy, however small, to the extensive privileging of human lives over those of animals. Rather than misdescribe our killing of animals with speciesist euphemisms, we should acknowledge our participation in animals' deaths and name them as such. 'Thericide' is intended to do just this.

We are inevitably led to a shocking question: Is thericide murder? In her book *Speciesism* the feminist activist/theorist Joan Dunayer claims that '[I]awmakers have characterized lethal trapping of nonhumans as lawful killing. They could just as easily characterize it as murder' (Dunayer 2004: 17; and see Animal Studies Group 2006: 3; Sollund 2011; Wyatt 2013). Jacques Derrida, too, makes a comparison between human genocide and our large-scale rearing and killing of animals for food, which has been 'over the past two centuries...*unprecedented*' (2002: 394-395). I have not been able to address the merits of these claims here. But a necessary

condition for their empowerment is the well-reasoned construction of another claim, namely, that animals are persons with inviolable rights.

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² Bentham himself suggested in a letter written in 'Crecheff in White Russia', however, that he had borrowed the idea of the Panopticon from several drawings of an inspection house executed ... by his brother Samuel (Bentham 1787: 65). A year earlier, in 1786, while he was manager of Potemkin's Krichev estate, Samuel Bentham designed workshops and a panoptical factory to guard the undisciplined overseers of peasant workers. The precise inspiration for Samuel Bentham's own design remains a mystery.

³ Used much earlier in a decidedly masculinist way (Corry 1801: 49), the term 'femicide' was first used in feminist discourse in 1974 by Diana Russell during the meetings of the first International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women, held in Brussels. As Russell (2011) recounts it, 'I first heard this word 37 years ago in 1974 when a friend in London told me that she had heard that a woman in the United States was planning to write a book titled *Femicide*. I immediately became very excited by this new word, seeing it as a substitute for the gender-neutral word "homicide"'.

⁴ 'Serial theriodicide' has been used as shorthand for a series of fatal sexual assaults on horses and cattle in England and Wales; for two decades of pigeon poisonings in Central Park in New York City; and for the decade-long killing of dogs along bicycle and jogging paths in affluent expatriate areas in Chinese Hong Kong (Beirne 2009: 17, 182).

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