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"Genocide" appears commonly in critical animal studies literature and sparsely in philosophy to describe human-caused violence against nonhuman beings. However, such uses of the term have rarely been informed by relevant work in genocide studies, nor otherwise formally substantiated. This thesis explores what is at stake when employing the term and proposes a model for appropriate application to nonhuman contexts. Claudia Card's notion of genocide as social death allows for the consideration of nonhuman animals as victims of genocide. Social vitality is important to the lives of some nonhuman animals and its forcible diminishment results in social death for those nonhuman groups. Thus, instances of violence that inflict social death among nonhuman animals *are* genocide. By recognizing that nonhumans are, in fact, rendered victims of genocide through human violence against them, we challenge the anthropocentric bias that is fundamental to all genocidal perpetration.

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Can Nonhumans Be Victims of Genocide?

The "question of animality" is not one question among others, of course. I have long considered it to be decisive (as one says), in itself and for its strategic value; and that's because, while it is difficult and enigmatic in itself, it also represents the limit upon which all the great questions are formed and determined, as well as all the concepts that attempt to delimit what is "proper to man," the essence and future of humanity, ethics, politics, law, "human rights," "crimes against humanity," "genocide," etc. – Jacques Derrida, "Violence Against Animals"

The first people who were struck by a certain number of points in common between the Holocaust and the industrial massacre of animals were not fanatical advocates of the animal cause but precisely the victims of this genocide – survivors or people who had lost close relatives. They were the ones who – almost against their will – found themselves describing the bitter memories of the Shoah that came over them when they were confronted by the reality of the slaughterhouses. They were the ones who were struck by the similarities between the functioning of the camps and that of industrial breeding operations: the large-scale, methodical organization of the killing, the stripping of all value from the lives of other beings, the convenient ignorance shown by the surrounding population. Lucy, whose two young sisters were struck down by the Nazis before their father's eyes, tells us: 'I have been haunted my whole life by the images of the Shoah, and there is no doubt that I was attracted to animal rights in part because of the similarities I felt between the institutionalized exploitation of animals and the Nazi genocide.' – Matthieu Ricard, A Plea for the Animals

Since its coinage during the Holocaust, "genocide" has been a term reserved for violence against humans. Simultaneously, many writers and activists have made comparisons between the Holocaust and human violence against nonhuman animals, or have identified such violence as genocide. A character in J. M. Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals* calls this move a cheap and tirelessly familiar comparison (Coetzee 1999, 50). But what, exactly, is illicit about the use of the term "genocide" to discuss harms against nonhumans? Can nonhumans be victims of genocide? What is at stake in our choice to include or exclude them from our understanding of genocide?

To date there has been no systematic philosophical investigation of the term and its use in describing nonhuman contexts. Stanley Cavell and Cora Diamond have written on Coetzee's novella, supporting his protagonist's recognition of genocidal violence against nonhuman animals (Cavell, Diamond, et al. 2008). Jacques Derrida has been famously quoted for his use of "genocide" to describe factory farming practices (Derrida and Roudinesco 2004). Still others have discussed harms against nonhumans as holocaustal or genocidal. Isaac Bashevis Singer is

widely cited for writing that "all people are Nazis; for the animals it is an eternal Treblinka" ("The Letter Writer" 1968). Yet these mentions do not justify or explain the use of "genocide" beyond the assumption that there is evident connection between the treatment of human genocide victims and the treatment of nonhuman animals.

Karen Davis writes about animal genocide more thoroughly in a section of her piece, "Chicken-Human Relationships" (2010). She cites Rafał Lemkin's definition of genocide, noting that genocide "includes physical, cultural, and ideological forms of victim annihilation" and attacks the victim group for its *identity* (Davis 2010, 256). Describing the harmful factory farming practices against chickens, she makes a case for such practices as genocidal because they impose not only physical horrors against individuals but proliferate "in virtually endless re-formations of animal bodies to fit the procrustean beds of global industrial agriculture and research" (Davis 2010, 258). Yet Davis' argument is focused exclusively on agricultural practices, and has also received little attention regarding her use of the term "genocide" for nonhuman contexts.

Genocide studies scholars and philosophers of genocide have hardly touched this issue as well. This paper offers a possible way to substantiate the use of the term "genocide" for violence against nonhuman animals through the work of feminist philosopher Claudia Card. Her definition of genocide as social death both identifies the characteristic harm of genocide and opens the possibility for meaningful discussion about atrocities against nonhuman animals. Other species derive their wellbeing from social relationships, a social vitality that is often diminished by human violence. As scholarship continues to blossom in the areas of animal psychology and animal culture, using the term "genocide" for nonhuman victims is a reminder of our own human

animality and the attributes shared across species that make genocide deplorable regardless of whether victims are human or nonhuman animals.

Responding to resistance

I suspect that much of the resistance to talking about nonhuman animals in this way is motivated by anthropocentric and speciesist tendencies. That is, humans have historically exploited nonhumans and differentiated themselves (arbitrarily!) over nonhuman others so frequently that we may seek to uphold this metaphysical distinction out of habit. This project to inquire into genocidal violence against nonhumans is meant to suggest that harms suffered by nonhuman entities are not, categorically, lesser harms to those suffered by humans. Our willingness to examine whether nonhumans can be victims of genocide is an expression of parity, a gesture toward transforming our ethics in this time of global ecological crisis.

Humans are animals, and so it should not be surprising that other animal bodies undergo trauma in similar ways to human bodies. This is not to say that there are no differences between humans and other animal species; of course, there are. But if the symptoms of genocide that we recognize in humans are observable in nonhumans, it is hubristic to dismiss nonhuman animals as possible victims. Animal psychology expert Frans de Waal has done considerable work to show the complex minds and inner lives of nonhuman animals. He argues that there is no other honest way to describe the characteristics that other animals have but through the very language we use to describe our own human attributes (*Primates and Philosophers* 2006, 67). For we share with many other animals self-awareness and complex emotions, social intelligence and learning processes. Such features in humans appear differently than those in other species, but

recently more and more reputable science has seriously challenged old assumptions about human beings as separate and unique from other animals.

Still, anthropocentrism is thoroughly ingrained in much of human society, and it is difficult for many to acknowledge the agency, intelligence, and culture of any nonhumans. De Waal sees this inertia as unacceptable:

> While it is true that animals are not humans, it is equally true that humans are animals. Resistance to this simple yet undeniable truth is… *anthropodenial,* the *a priori* rejection of shared characteristics between humans and animals. Anthropodenial denotes willful blindness to the human-like characteristics of animals, or the animal-like characteristics of ourselves (2006, 65).

In order to combat the willful blindness of anthropodenial, it is an appropriate and timely task to uncover the biases in our language, as Derrida suggests. "Genocide" is one such term that has been anthropocentrically applied.

Why might use of the term "genocide" be appropriate to discuss violence against nonhumans? Use of the term shows a willingness to take nonhuman animals seriously, to acknowledge that they can be victims of human-perpetrated atrocities. Informed and substantiated use of the term has the potential to recognize the shared material harm that victims of any genocide suffer. I do not mean to suggest that victims of genocide suffer in the exact same way. There are irreducible differences of every atrocity. The instances of violence are not identical to one another and yet they share relevant features. Genocide inflicts *a kind* of harm that is similar across its iterations. If nonhumans suffer violence that we would call genocidal when perpetrated against humans, then "genocide" may be an appropriate term, simply because such violence wreaks immense damage upon the mental, emotional, physical, and social health of many species. Applying the term to nonhuman contexts also acknowledges that genocide's particular kind of harm is enabled through a logic of justification, regardless of who the victims

are. Such genocidal logic inflicts violence against human groups as it does against nonhuman groups.

Karen Warren describes this phenomenon as the "logic of domination." In all instances of domineering – whether by one group of persons over another or with value concepts (such as "human" over "animal") – the actions of domination follow a logical "structure of argumentation which leads to a justification of subordination" (Warren 1990, 128). Without this mechanism to justify why one group or concept is superior to another, we are left only with descriptive differences between the groups or concepts. The logic of domination provides the justification for moral inequality between two groups. As but one example, the Hutu government propaganda in the years leading up to and during the Rwandan genocide called the Tutsi people *inyenzi*, or cockroaches. This tactic was used to support and incite violence against the Tutsi: by the logic of domination, humans are superior to insects and are morally allowed to dominate insects *because* they are superior. The Tutsi suffered horrific violence through this justification. Though its implementation has features specific to the particular context in which it is used, the logic of domination adheres the same structure of reasoning to all instances of oppression.

Genocides are linked through the means of their justification by perpetrators: through a logic of domination (whether consciously or implicitly employed). And, one shared feature of human genocides is the dehumanization of victims, such as the Tutsi portrayed as cockroaches. "Genocide" might rightly refer to harms against human and nonhuman animals because it is an acknowledgement that the logic of domination is deployed in both cases. In human and nonhuman cases, victims of genocide suffer because they are thrust into the space outside of our moral consideration. But this move to recognize the shared mechanism of justification for

violence against humans and nonhuman animals may not be enough to substantiate the use of "genocide" to acknowledge nonhuman victims, so I will build a further case.

In the following sections I discuss reasons why some people might be resistant to using "genocide" to describe harms against nonhuman beings. I have roughly categorized these concerns into three categories: (1) the lingual and etymological constraints of the term "genocide," (2) that comparative work in genocide demeans victims of genocide, and (3) that instances of harm against nonhuman beings should be identified with language other than "genocide."

Etymological constraints

Resistance to the application of "genocide" for nonhuman contexts is encouraged by the current legal and societal uses of the term and its etymology. Translations of the term in some languages denote that only humans can be victims of genocide. In the German, for example, the word is *Völkermord,* literally "people-murder," constituted by the word for human people, *Volk,* and the word for killing, murder, and homicide, *Mord.* The same connotations arise in Scandinavian translations of the term. These translations add the human dimension to "genocide" when its linguistic roots in fact do not necessitate human victims. Despite such translations, there is no etymological reason why "genocide" cannot function as a descriptor for violence against nonhumans.

"Genocide" comes from the Greek *genos* and the French-Latin *-cide* or *-cida.* Since Rafał Lemkin coined the English term "genocide" in 1944, *genos* has frequently been cited as denoting "race" or "tribe." English-speakers do not usually recognize "races" in nonhuman animals, which suggests that "genocide" is only appropriate when discussing human victims. Lemkin's book,

Axis Rule in Occupied Europe, brought the term into international law, where it was adopted officially in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly for the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Convened on the heels of the Shoah, the UN's definition of genocide was colored by the characteristics of the Holocaust under National Socialism. With the Holocaust in view, where the Jewish people suffered intentional and systematic violence for their elimination, "genocide" was said to target human races or tribes.

Yet constricting *genos* to mean only "race" or "tribe" is a parochial view of the historical usage of the root: *genos* has been widely and consistently circulated in Greek of all periods, varying in purpose. It has been used to denote "species," "sort," "kind," "category," "kin," "lineage," "family," "genus," "race," and "generation," among other meanings (Oxford Classical Dictionary 2015). Retaining historical fidelity to the roots of the word, English speakers, at least, can responsibly use the term "genocide" to talk about harms against nonhumans – especially because the Greek *genos* does not require specifically human groups. Still "genocide" contemporarily retains the connotation that it describes violence only against human victims, and this is partially due to how genocide is officially defined.

The UN serves as an international authority (at least in name), and its definition of the phenomenon has sway on international policy and indirectly upon societal understandings of genocide. The 1948 Convention was aimed toward addressing the crimes of National Socialism and preventing similar harms from being perpetrated. Article II of the Convention reads:

> genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) killing members of the group; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (UN 1948)

Although the language of the Convention at least appears broad enough to describe other genocides, the definition draws its justification from the specific violence of the Shoah. Because the Shoah has been called the paradigmatic instance of genocide, especially at the time of the Convention, the definition based upon this paradigm carries the characteristic features of that violence – namely, the clear intention to destroy an entire population of people by means of physical massacre. The definition thereby reinforces these Holocaust characteristics as essential to genocide, even if the language of the definition seems more generalized. Initiated by the Convention and following its definition, early genocide studies also focused almost exclusively upon the Holocaust rather than upon other genocides or comparative studies of genocide.

Some scholars have maintained that the Holocaust is and should be the paradigm occurrence of genocide, and still others have promoted an extreme stance that the Holocaust is the *only* genocide. This latter position was most prominently held by Steven T. Katz, who argued that understanding the term correctly means accepting the atrocity against European Jewry during World War II as the unique instance of genocide (Novick 199, 196). Since then, scholars in genocide studies have repeatedly argued that the Genocide Convention's definition of the term is too narrow (Zimmerer 2017, 8). The adamant cries of "never again" heard worldwide after the Shoah were notably absent and did not rally international intervention during the Rwandan genocide, the genocide in Darfur, and the genocide against the Rohingya (to name a few) (Kelly 2000; Penketh 2005; Fisher 2017). In the face of these atrocities, Katz' view unfairly limits "genocide" and renders it unuseful for the identification and intervention into other instances that might, in fact, be genocidal. The view of the Holocaust as paradigmatic might also unfairly limit "genocide" insofar as it is believed to be a rigid model of every genocidal instance. Atrocities have similarities, and distinguishing their shared characteristics among their contextual features

is necessary for the prevention of such violence. The term "genocide" must be defined in a way that genocidal atrocities are actually, if ever only partially, described.

The limits of genocidal comparison

The Katzian view expresses a common worry surrounding the work of comparison between atrocities. It says that any comparison between the Holocaust and other atrocities against humans diminishes the breadth and depth of the suffering of Shoah victims. More generally, there is a concern that the act of comparing genocidal atrocities degrades victim experience and dishonors those who should be remembered and protected. This worry primarily expresses a desire for victims to be recognized for their unique experiences. Generalizing must zoom out from the particular details, and generalizations about violent atrocities do not reflect the unique features of individual atrocities.

I sympathize with the desire to honor and bear witness to victims' experiences. Bearing witness to pain is a powerful expression of solidarity with victims and their communities and is often incredibly motivating in enacting change. Victims' experience and the particular, complex details of an atrocity should be analyzed and shared. It seems that the creation of collective memory to respect victims is impelled by a desire to prevent future violence. Prevention requires an acknowledgement that the influencing factors upon any atrocity will never occur quite the same way again. Atrocities are material events that each have their own irreducible particularities: they have their own phenomenological features and arise from specific contexts.

Yet there is no logical reason why defining the commonalities between these atrocities diminishes their individual characteristics. Understanding qualities of genocide in general must not erase victim experience. Even when they share attributes, genocides cannot be folded into

one because of each genocide's distinctive events, violence, and horror. Some genocides are even identified by their own terms, such as how the historical event of genocide as perpetrated by German National Socialism in the twentieth century is described by the terms "Holocaust" and "Shoah." These terms evoke the particularities of *that* violence, *those* victims, *this* horror.[1] Comparison does not in itself eradicate the important aspects of victims' experience. Most scholars agree that "genocide" has some traction in describing a kind of atrocity that several instances share, and that the term ought to have international purchase in order for the prevention and intervention of atrocities. We can honor victims of genocide by remembering them and bearing witness to their experience, and also by ensuring that genocide is prevented, recognized, and halted. For these tasks, we need an appropriate term that acknowledges what these atrocities have in common.

Further, resisting comparison may suggest a more problematic view, namely that we ought to hierarchize our concern for atrocities because there is limited moral energy that we can devote to such issues. It is true that individuals experience limits upon their moral energy and comportment, but this does not mean that larger human communities cannot address multiple moral problems at once. There is no finitude to concern and care that necessitates our sustained disengagement from particular issues. Addressing police brutality against Black people does not necessitate that we cannot address poor employment conditions for migrant and undocumented workers. Pragmatically, of course, there are difficulties surrounding how resources are allocated toward different ends, but ethically there is no convincing reason why we cannot be moved to act on multiple issues.

It is perhaps easier to see the force of this perceived problem, which I will call "moral finitude," when people resist addressing moral concerns surrounding nonhuman animals. The

argument is some version of the following: “How can we care about violence against animals when there is horrible violence happening to people?” In this question about moral finitude there is an implicit hierarchy that some moral issues deserve our attention over others. Carol Adams calls this a “hierarchy of caring” in which some acts of caring are hostile to other acts (“War on Compassion” 2016, 3). In this case, a hierarchy between humans and nonhuman animals is maintained wherein humans are first priority: it says that people must care about other humans before they can care about nonhumans, *and* that caring about nonhumans is somehow detrimental to addressing human injustice.

This hierarchy of care is mistaken because caring about nonhumans does not necessitate less care for human issues. In fact, care about human issues and nonhuman animals is interpenetrative, because violence against each are interdependent, as the Rwandan cockroach propaganda exemplifies (Adams 2016, 4). Caring about multiple genocides, whether it be a comparison between the Holocaust and other genocidal atrocities or instances of violence against both humans and nonhumans, does not necessitate the disrespect of victims. If instances of violence meet the requirements of the definition of genocide, then those instances against nonhuman animals can be called genocide without disrespecting human victims and their communities.

However, the objection to the application of “genocide” to describe nonhuman animals may be more serious than a worry that nonhuman issues distract us from pressing human issues. People with this objection oppose any comparison with nonhuman animals because they believe the comparison to be actively insulting to human victims – not merely that it undermines our ability to respond to violence against humans but that the very act of comparing is illicit and

prejudiced. This stance is very similar to the worry that the Katzian view expresses: comparison does damage by likening situations that should not be likened.

Take, as an example of this stance, the reactions to comparison campaigns launched by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). In 2003 PETA released a campaign and exhibit called "Holocaust on Your Plate" that displayed photographs of victims in Nazi death camps alongside photographs of nonhuman animals in slaughterhouses and factory farms. The Anti-Defamation League responded that the "abusive treatment of animals should be opposed, but cannot and must not be compared to the Holocaust" (CNN 2003). Two years later, PETA received complaints about their "Animal Liberation" campaign that juxtaposed images of American slavery with images of nonhuman animals. One panel showed a photograph of the lynching of two Black people next to a photograph of a cow hanging in a slaughterhouse. NAACP officials spoke out in protest of the campaign, and attendees to the display in Connecticut shouted that it was racist (Los Angeles Times 2005). Bracketing any critique of PETA itself for the purposes of this example, these comparisons of violence against humans and nonhuman animals were staunchly opposed as offensive and racist.

It is not news that groups of people have historically been marginalized through processes of dehumanization. The depiction of people as animals has served to relegate human groups to a place outside moral consideration where violence against them is permitted. Just as violence against animals is permitted, so is violence permitted against any being that is not fully human. The dehumanization, or animalization, of human groups makes it easier for perpetrators to act violently against them (Patterson 2002, 109). For much of Western human history, societal authorities have argued and reinforced the idea that human dignity is drawn from *not being animal*. Animal life has consistently been conveyed in Western cultures as deplorable, poor,

unthinking, robotic, and generally abysmal. The biological fact that humans are a kind of animal is still frequently waved away as an unimportant or inconvenient evolutionary detail. So, when already marginalized human groups are displayed alongside nonhuman animals or as bearing similarity to animals, it is quite understandable for people to be upset. The comparison seems to say that such groups have the same moral status as animals: un-considerable and outside moral concern. We feel that this comparison serves to diminish humans down to "animal" level, rather than honoring their agency and traditions and perspectives.

I agree that catastrophic violences like the Holocaust and slavery should never be trivialized, and I understand why we vehemently oppose these comparisons. The people depicted in PETA's photographs have already suffered dastardly events and despicable racism. But is such a comparison between marginalized humans and nonhumans *necessarily racist*? My question is not meant to belittle the important task of identifying and eliminating racism in our societal practices and rhetoric. I mean only to explore the reasons why we are offended by such comparisons and ask what our world might look like if we could put aside our ingrained assumptions about human superiority to animals.

For something to be racist, it must posit one group of people above another, claiming the superiority of a group over and against another. A racist practice unfairly advantages a "race" while disadvantaging another "race," such as police "stop-and-frisk" practices that are used primarily to investigate Black, LatinX, and other People of Color without sufficient cause. Stop-and-frisk practices privilege white people because whites are not stopped without reasonable cause and they need not normally worry about being stopped.

But do the comparisons between atrocities in human history and the treatment of nonhuman animals claim that one group of human people is superior to another? Do these

comparisons discriminate against an "inferior" group? It is true that these campaigns do not show the supposedly superior race as compared to nonhuman animals. The images do not depict lynched white people or Aryan Germans emaciated in death camps. Instead, the photographs reveal the racism rampant in human history, whereby Jews and Blacks have been rendered "inferior" and have suffered intense and unacceptable brutality.

The campaigns certainly intend to show a purported "superior" group and "inferior" group. These campaigns are descriptive rather than normative – they do not demand that groups labeled as "inferior" *should* be so labeled. On a very deep level, these comparisons operate upon our assumptions that humans are superior to nonhuman animals. The offense we take to PETA's campaigns relies on the assumption that human suffering cannot and should not be equated to animal experience. It hinges upon an acceptance of a hierarchical ordering of moral demands that upholds the human as superior and permits the subjugation of inferior nonhuman animals. Marjorie Spiegel puts it this way:

> With the exception of those who still cling – either overtly or subtly – to racist thought, most members of our society have reached the conclusion that it was and is wrong to treat blacks 'like animals.' But with regard to the animals themselves, most still feel that it is acceptable to treat them, to some degree or another, in exactly this same manner; to treat them, as we say, 'like animals.' That is, we have decided that treatment which is wholly unacceptable when received by a human being is in fact the *proper* manner in which to treat a non-human animal. (*The Dreaded Comparison* 1996, 18-19)

In a societal framework where the conviction that humans are superior to nonhuman animals is abundant and powerful, this comparison between marginalized racial groups offends because it seems to reinforce the insulting worldview that these groups are only as important as animals (so therefore, they are deemed unimportant and disposable as animals are).

But with a worldview that does not accept nonhuman animals as inferior or morally un-considerable, a comparison between humans and nonhumans is nonthreatening. Many indigenous cultures have traditionally likened humans to nonhuman animals and entities, honoring a tribal member with an animal name and recognition of their personality as similar to qualities of other animals. These comparisons between the human and the nonhuman do not demean the human person because nonhumans are admired and respected as deserving agents. Nonhumans are not dismissed as immediately and categorically dominatable.

So it is the hierarchy itself that is problematic, maintaining that humans are superior to nonhumans and that nonhumans deserve lesser treatment because they are inferior. The problem is not the comparison between humans and nonhuman animals but the logic of domination whereby violence is perpetrated.

The logic of domination serves to justify the subordination of a target group. Insofar as human groups are marked as "subhuman" and "animal," the subjugation of these groups is *permitted* under the logic of domination. This logic does not merely support the domination of nonhuman animals thought to be lesser than humans, but equally supports the domination of human beings who do not seem to fit the "ideal" of a human. Historically in America these individuals have been Jewish, Black, Native, LatinX, Asian, female, transgender, queer, incarcerated, or otherwise "deviant" from the white, cisgender, heterosexual, Christian man.

It may seem as though the prudent fix for this problem of dehumanization is simply to ensure that marginalized groups of people are uplifted and never made despicable through animalization. However, this "solution" hardly reaches the underlying cause of oppression. It does not erase the mechanism of harm, namely that being considered "animal" pushes one outside of moral consideration. This idea that animalizing a human means you can treat them

however you want is an unargued for view, and a dubious assumption. Spiegel reminds that it is the shape of oppression to relegate groups to the subjugated position, and that groups are commonly dismissed as unimportant and their social justice causes insignificant in the face of other issues:

> Only through a rejection of violence and oppression *themselves* will we ever find a long-term 'freedom and justice *for all*.' It is not an 'either-or' situation; the idea that one group will have its rights protected or respected only after another 'more important' group is totally comfortable is finally being widely recognized as a delay tactic used by those resisting change. Women were told to keep waiting for years for their right to vote because other issues were 'more important.' Black people in the United States were told that their slavery was an 'economic necessity' to be continued for the good of the country. Until the reforms of the early 1990's, blacks in South Africa were still being told that apartheid was necessary. Necessary for whom? Surely not the people who were living under this form of slavery. (Spiegel 1996, 18-19)

We must address the violence of atrocities by attending to the deep mechanisms that set them in motion. So long as the logic of domination is deployed as a justification mechanism for harmful actions, human groups will be dominated and victimized just as nonhuman animals are.

The solution to the problem of genocide cannot be the Katzian stance, nor can we afford merely to preserve the term for atrocities against humans only. The real harm comes from the fact that worthy beings are excluded from our moral consideration – beings both nonhuman and human. Redefining the boundaries of our moral consideration to include nonhuman animals would prevent the logic of domination that allows for human subordination through their animalization. For being called animal would no longer authorize violent treatment. Using the term "genocide" to talk about violence against nonhuman animals illuminates the logic of domination at play that allows atrocities to occur, its victims human or nonhuman.

Other terminology

Even if one wishes to take seriously the issue of our treatment of nonhuman animals and believes nonhumans to have moral worth, one may still want to isolate the use of the term "genocide" to human instances. Proponents of this position may be content with identifying atrocities against animals with another term. In his book *A Plea for the Animals,* Matthieu Ricard argues to extend moral consideration to nonhuman animals and yet maintains that "genocide" is an inappropriate term to describe harms against nonhumans. "Genocide" is an illicit term for violence against nonhumans, he argues, because the UN reserves this term for violence against humans. Ricard does not question this definition and advocates instead for the term "zoocide" to describe genocide-like atrocities against nonhuman animals. As I have already discussed, this disregard for the nonhuman application of genocide cannot be justified through an appeal to the UN's definition, which has already been criticized for its narrowness, nor justified etymologically. Proponents of alternative terms must offer further argumentation for why "genocide" ought to be reserved for humans only and why, exactly, the term is inappropriate in discussing nonhuman contexts.

Others may resist "genocide" because it seemingly cannot characterize how we treat animals. Cary Wolfe writes that the comparison between treatment of nonhuman animals and the Holocaust is deficient because nonhuman animals have actually received worse treatment than victims of genocide. Many more billions of animals have died and continue to die in industrial farming than people died in the Holocaust, he says (Wolfe 2009, 567). Wolfe here implies that "genocide" cannot go far enough to describe the atrocities committed against nonhuman animals.

However, a focus on body counts does not fully consider the kind of harm that is suffered by victims of genocide. "Genocide" describes a harm beyond what the term "mass murder"

describes. Mass murder only denotes physical death, where genocide (as I will argue in the next section) inflicts physical and social death. There are central characteristics to genocidal violence that cannot be captured with the term "mass murder." Certainly genocide usually includes a kind of mass murder, but it also imposes further harms upon victims. If we recognize these physical and social harms among nonhuman victims, then, against Wolfe, we must appropriately call such violence "genocide." Alternative terms are likely to fall short of accurately describing the central features of genocidal violence. For instance, some scholars have called the human-nonhuman relations a "war" (Wadiwel 2015). But this term is unsatisfactory since it erases victimhood and seems to connote that the perpetrator group and the group receiving violence are somehow equal opponents, both willingly engaging in their tussle with one another.

There is also a movement to recognize "ecocide," or the massive destruction of our global environment. The term has some similarities to "genocide," with an intonation that evokes genocidal images. It was first brought into legal use by Arthur Galston at the Conference on War and National Responsibility in 1970, addressing the harmful ecological effects of Agent Orange as a biological weapon. His proposal suggested "that environmental destruction can have a genocidal impact and also that the environment can be seen as a victim of ecocide in the same way a social group of people can be seen as victims of genocide" (Crook & Short 2017, 45). In 2011 the term received greater attention after Polly Higgins published *Eradicating Ecocide* and launched a website advocating for the addition of ecocide to the UN's list of crimes against peace – under which genocide is already listed. By her definition, ecocide is "loss or damage to, or destruction of ecosystem(s) of a given territory(ies), such that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants has been or will be severely diminished" (Higgins 2018).

Legally, "ecocide" makes sense as an apparatus for corporate, national, and international accountability. It also expresses something specific and fresh about destruction against landscapes, ecosystems, and other abiotic ecological entities and processes. However, "ecocide" does not capture the specific harm of genocide, namely the social harms that are imposed onto and felt by nonhuman *animals*. Also, by employing a term specifically for the destruction of nonhuman ecosystems – that is, a *separate* term from the term used to identify violence with the same characteristics against humans – it does not challenge the logic of domination that makes genocide possible against both humans and nonhuman animals. Using the term "genocide" reflects what is really a blurry and questionable distinction between humans and other animals. Whether the victim is a human or nonhuman animal, there are central features to genocide that allow it to be identified across species lines.

The next portion of the paper addresses these particular harms that genocide inflicts.

Nonhuman social death

Having addressed some objections to the use of "genocide" for nonhuman contexts, I have not yet justified any application of the term to nonhumans. Is it appropriate to describe harms against nonhumans as genocidal, or to recognize nonhumans as victims of genocide? Which contexts might support the use of the term? I turn to these questions now.

We must first recognize that there is no unifying definition for what "genocide" is, even among scholars in the field of genocide studies. Every single clause of the UN's definition of genocide, as stated by the 1948 special convention, is controversial. One major movement within genocide studies has been to elucidate gender issues in the harm of genocide, which raises definitional questions such as whether women (or other genders) can be a victim group and

whether instances of mass rape ought to be identified as genocide. What genocide is and how to recognize it are by no means closed issues. I highlight this state of the field because the consideration of nonhumans in relation to genocide does not upturn established principles or convictions in genocide studies. Who victims are and what kinds of distinct harms they suffer remain open topics in the scholarship.

To consider nonhumans as victims of genocide, a working definition of genocide would need to be specific enough to identify the particular harms of genocide against other crimes, yet broad enough that nonhumans could be included as victims. Under the UN's definition, genocide can only be committed against "a national, ethnical, racial or religious group" (UN 1948). While this definition cannot accommodate harms against nonhumans (unless nonhuman victims are recognized as part of the identified groups), other definitions of genocide may – and such definitions may also address further concerns with the UN description. I find philosopher Claudia Card's feminist concept of genocide especially compelling, not least because her characterization leaves room to consider nonhuman victims.

Card spent much of her philosophical career secularizing use of the term "evil" to discuss moral atrocities. In her 2010 book, *Confronting Evils* (hereafter "CE"), Card identifies genocide among these atrocities as a particular type of evil that inflicts unique harms. That is, genocide cannot be encompassed by other terms of atrocity such as "mass murder" or "torture." "Genocide" denotes a specific kind of inflicted harm, which she identifies as *social death*. In contrast to other terms, "genocide" as social death does not necessarily include the infliction of physical death. She argues both that genocide is social death and that social death is "utterly central" to the evil of genocide. She comments that she wants to keep this "utterly central"

descriptor rather open, but she clarifies that she means social death to be a salient characteristic of most paradigmatic instances of genocide (PBS 2013).

Card borrows the concept of social death from Orlando Patterson, describing the phenomenon as the deprivation or loss of social vitality. Patterson's notion of social death hinges upon natal alienation, such as in the case of slaves. Transported from their homeland into subordination, slaves were rendered socially dead, "alienated from all 'rights' or claims of birth" (Patterson 1982, 5). Patterson writes,

> [Slaves] ceased to belong in [their] own right to any legitimate social order. All slaves experienced, at the very least, a secular excommunication. Not only was the slave denied all claims on, and obligations to, his parents and living blood relations but, by extension, all such claims and obligations on his more remote ancestors and on his descendants. He was truly a genealogical isolate. Formally isolated in his social relations with those who lived, he also was culturally isolated from the social heritage of his ancestors. Slaves […] were not allowed freely to integrate the experience of their ancestors into their lives, to inform their understanding of social reality with the inherited meanings of their natural forebears, or to anchor the living present in any conscious community of memory. (Patterson 1982, 5)

Social death imposes this "secular excommunication" by alienating individuals from connections to their group and diminishing their social vitality.

Card defines social vitality as "the meanings, shapes, and contexts given to the lives of individuals by social relationships both personal and institutional, contemporary and intergenerational, that unite them into a 'people' or other significant community" (2013). She notes that social vitality presents in many forms, including through linguistic, educational, artistic, political, economic and religious practices, but also – and perhaps most importantly – through friendship and kinship networks. Social death is a major, "profound" loss of social vitality, "a loss of social identity and consequently a serious loss of meaning for your existence" (Card 2013).

Card's description of social vitality does not require that those who experience it must be a "people." Social vitality exists collectively but is felt individually. Groups with social vitality may be united under the designation of being "a people," but the more important factors for social vitality are that these individuals exist in community and that individuals' identities are determined through the meanings, shapes, and contexts of the community. Victim groups need not even recognize themselves as a group. Social vitality only requires that individuals identify themselves as part of the group and draw their identity from being a member.

Though nonhuman animals are not typically recognized by Western societies as "people," this term is not necessarily restricted to human people. We might reconsider other species as being kinds of "people," as do many indigenous cultures and nonanthropocentric scholars. Through her flexible characterization of social vitality, Card does not demand an anthropocentric lens to understanding genocide as social death. Any group with social vitality, for whose members that social vitality plays a central role in their lives, is a group that can suffer social death. (Because of this focus on social death, it is important to note that the application of "genocide" now primarily describes harms to human and nonhuman *animals*. I admit this limitation and will return to this in a later portion of the paper; yet, it is valuable here to acknowledge that other, non-social or abiotic nonhuman beings may not be immediately included in Card's approach.)

We must ask what kind of group can be vulnerable to genocide, for not all groupings impart the social vitality that is destroyed by genocide. Any "group" reflects a collection or an assemblage of parts, but not necessarily one that plays an important role in identity construction. So, which groups may suffer genocide? Could there be a gay genocide? Is femicide a kind of genocide? Card notes that though violence against gays may not be a paradigmatic instance of

genocide, when the assault upon gays is systematic, it may be considered genocide. But it is not merely the systematic quality of the violence whereby it is genocidal. Determining such systematic harm against gays as genocide would be dependent upon examining "to what extent the destroyed community had contributed meaning and identity to its members, and whether the loss of those meanings would leave those members socially dead" (2013). It is possible for an individual to be spared social death if they have other significant communities from which they draw social vitality. Insofar as being part of gay communities substantially provides identity and meaning to gay peoples' lives, the destruction of such communities would inflict social death upon them and would thereby be genocide.

To recognize instances of violence against women as genocide, the extent to which social vitality constitutes group members' identities would also need to be analyzed: for though communities of women may serve to provide meaning and identity, it is less clear that genocide could be perpetrated against women "at large." Card says that "femicide" cannot rightly be called genocide because being female is a category or class (Card 2013). There is no significant determination of a woman's identity as shared by a grouping of all women on the globe – that is, she is not immediately or appreciably given meaning by being identified as part of the aggregate of women. But smaller communities of women (which would nonetheless be included in a larger designation of all women on the planet) might be victims of genocide if such a community served to substantially provide identity to its members. Card leaves broad the content of the substantial extent to which social vitality constitutes group members' identities in order to accommodate a range of genocidal instances. Regardless of differences in genocidal violence, genocide inflicts social death: the forcible diminishment of the social vitality that significantly contributes to meaning and identity in individuals' lives.

It is worthwhile here to say something about how group membership may be experienced or determined by individuals in comparison to a group's being externally determined. Card does not touch on this aspect explicitly, but my additions are not incompatible with her position. She and I are both interested in drawing attention to the real harms that victims of violence suffer. For an individual member of a group, the "group-ness" that constitutes the group as such may not be phenomenologically felt. Group members may not experience violence against them as group violence, even though they may be externally identified or idealized as a particular group. That is, a group need not be preconceived or otherwise defined prior to the infliction of harms against their members. One's group membership may be elucidated as violence against the group occurs. Hannah Arendt famously suggested this phenomenon by saying: "If one is attacked as a Jew, one must defend oneself as a Jew" (Arendt 2000, 12). The suggestion I am making is twofold: violence is not necessarily individually recognized as group violence, and groups may emerge as groups *while* violence is directed against them. That is, the groupness of a group is not always known or promoted by its members.

Additionally, group membership is rarely sharply or completely captured, since each individual is part of multiple groups. As intersectional feminists have insightfully indicated, membership in one group influences and changes one's phenomenological experience in another. A Black woman's experience of membership in a group of women will be of a different sort than a Native woman's or a white woman's or a trans woman's. Because of this, we can hardly think of group membership as static or with clear edges. We need an approach to analyzing violence against groups that is sensitive to these nuances in group membership and individual experience. Otherwise, the risk is essentializing a group in demanding a particular kind of "groupness" character. Card's focus on the social vitality that materializes from friendship and kinship

networks escapes this kind of dangerous essentializing, since it examines lived relationships between individuals to understand their role in a group.

That the groupness of a group is not easily or fully summarized and may only emerge in situations of violence against the group helps us frame what to expect from nonhuman groups. Card's approach to understanding genocide requires that we closely examine meaningful connections between group members, rather than relying on assumptions about what constitutes a (politically recognizable) "group." Conceiving of social groups in this way illuminates not only the kinds of human groups that can suffer genocide, but also how nonhuman animals might be victims of genocide. Their social death occurs within groups with specific shared social patterns because their lives are constituted through those social bonds. Nonhuman groups may not identify themselves to human observers as groups, yet their social practices reveal the centrality of the social vitality they draw from their communities. Many animals – including humans – may not recognize the importance of their group's social vitality and their membership in it until the group becomes threatened or compromised. Neither is their active recognition of their group membership a necessary component of their social vitality.

Like women are a category or class, a species is also a category or class. Just as humans do not draw social vitality from the whole of the human species, neither do other beings draw their social vitality from the entire class of their species. Social vitality is created intimately through the connections that individuals cultivate with one another. Therefore, it may not make sense to talk about genocide against whole species, unless very convincing evidence arose that kinship networks stretched meaningfully to every individual in a species.[2] For my purposes in this paper, though I often use the term "species" to discuss harms against nonhumans, I mean to elucidate the social vitality and death of particular groups within species designations – which is

where the social vitality and the social death may be felt. Humans do not experience genocide at the species level, and neither do any of the nonhuman animals I will describe below. Because social vitality is generated and maintained through local community groups, this is where genocide also occurs.

However, the social vitality of groups of nonhumans is largely assumed to be absent, at least outside of critical animal studies and ethology. Because nonhuman groups' social vitality is mostly unknown by humans, harms against nonhuman animals are often perpetrated against a nonhuman "species." Unlike attacks against other human groups, directed harms against nonhumans do not tend to target nonhuman animals because of their specific group's identity and practices below the species level. That is, I am unaware of human attempts to diminish particular groups of species members, except in bounded geographic ranges. Rather, nonhumans are usually targeted at the species level: they are targeted for being members of a certain nonhuman species population.

Card acknowledges that species themselves can be victims of atrocities (CE 112-113), though she does not examine violence against nonhumans as genocide. She does not cite the social death of nonhuman species. Yet her framework leaves space to consider nonhuman animals: when we recognize social vitality in nonhuman lives and the social death they suffer by violence against them, we are able to appropriately recognize nonhuman animals as victims of genocide. Again, rarely is this social vitality to be observed at the species level. Social vitality and social death are most easily seen in groups within species designations, because that is where the social vitality meaningfully affects individual group members.

Though I am concerned with the multiplicity of atrocities harming nonhuman entities, our purposes in analyzing genocidal violence are best served in examining social vitality of smaller

communities within a species population.[3] Nevertheless, I continue to use the term "species" to talk about nonhuman animals despite its lack of precision in describing differences between community groups within species designations. This conscious choice is meant to admit that human actions against nonhuman animals at least purport to act against entire species. Aside from this, my hope is that appreciating groups of nonhumans will flavor the term "species" so that it does not preclude our awareness of the materially different communities that arise when individuals interact with one another. That is, I mean to direct attention toward the particularities of such diverse communities that create social vitality.

Moving from species-level theorizing and toward the social vitality of communities helps to explain how genocide can occur even without extinction or total elimination of a group. Card notes that loss of social vitality is "not all or nothing." Human victims of genocide endure; there are always some survivors of genocide. Nonhuman victims also survive genocidal violence. By survival, we understand that (A) some individuals who have suffered genocidal violence persist, (B) a community that has suffered genocidal violence may not be completely destroyed, and (C) violence need not eliminate whole cultures or species to be genocide. We need not seek examples that demonstrate the complete or near-eradication of a group to identify the occasion of social death. Card writes, "The survival of a culture does not by itself tell us about the degree of alienation that is experienced by individual survivors. Knowledge of a heritage is not by itself sufficient to produce vital connections to it" (CE 77). Simply because a group persists does not ensure its members are not experiencing social death. An observant openness to the narratives of social vitality within and among species members is required to understand the ways of life that contribute to their social vitality: how their interactions with one another constitute the practices

and relationships that provide meaning and a sense of identity to nonhuman individuals and collectives.

I anticipate an objection here to the social vitality of nonhuman animals. The concern is about the difficulty of determining whether there is "identity" or "meaning" in nonhuman lives. Because of this difficulty, this reasoning goes, we cannot attribute the experience of identity and meaning to nonhuman animals *at all*. This objection is comprised of two problems: (1) a categorical or metaphysical dismissal of animals and (2) the epistemological worry about knowing whether or how other animals think and feel. I shall attempt to answer both components of this objection.

(1) This objection relies upon certain notions of what "identity" and "meaning" are – notions that not only assume specifically human forms of identity and meaning, but also traditionally assume identity and meaning as dominant cultures have defined them. Such dominant conceptions of social vitality have historically excluded other cultural epistemologies and ways of being in the world. For example, the imperial British assumed that Indians were spineless and lacking in integrity when they came to India, whereas Indians simply expressed a more relational, family-centered notion of identity. The triumphant individual, as valued and representative of identity to the British, was not present in the Indian ontology. This is not because Indian culture has less identity or worse notions of identity; the white, Western conception of what that identity ought to be was used to subordinate those that British thought were inadequate. Further, human cultures who have expressed their identity outside of the white Western conception have frequently been labeled by their dominators as subhuman and animal. Such labels have served to logically justify the subordination of these groups. For a truly sensitive ethic, we must leave these concepts of identity and meaning open to the plurality of

experience even across species designations, lest even marginalized humans be harmed through these frameworks.

I am suggesting that the metaphysical assumptions about human superiority prevent us from seeing identity and meaning in places other than in ourselves. The British dismissed the Indian perspective because of the metaphysical assumption that their own worldview was invincible and superior. A similar conviction about human identity and meaning can categorically and totally block our seeing any alternative, even when nonhumans possess identity and meaning.

(2) It is sometimes a great challenge for us to understand and communicate with nonhuman animals. Yet it is possible. Ethology and other biological work continually expose insights into the lives of nonhuman animals that many were previously unable to see, likely because of metaphysical blockage as described above. There is indeed an epistemological difficulty in understanding what identity and meaning consist in for any nonhuman species, but it does seem possible to determine. We must be willing to call these features what they are, in full knowledge that humans and other animals share many evolutionary characteristics (although they iterate quite differently from species to species). We must recognize these shared qualities or else commit De Waal's anthropodenial. We receive glimpses of nonhuman identity and meaning because we are familiar with these features in ourselves. We can understand nonhuman social vitality because it is similar to our own.

Card's depiction of social vitality allows us to recognize that relationships and communal practices are central to identity constitution for group members. They recognize themselves within their kinship networks, differentiating themselves from other members of their communities and recognizing their role in the group. These are evolutionary necessities, skills

that ensure survival. Identity need not be defined as self-reflective capability or ability to abstractly define one's station in life through category descriptions. Identity is placing oneself in relation to others. Meaning emerges from these interactions of individuals with each other: the social interaction between individuals of a group makes an individual's life positive, fulfilling, healthy, and whole. We need not necessitate that other species demonstrate meaning through the same lingual and semantic ways that is attributed to humans. By observing the behaviors of other species, we can understand how many species are socially adapted and that their cooperative practices contribute to their wellbeing. Humans are one of many such species who draw health benefits and purpose from our connections with one another. Card herself does not rely upon an anthropocentric definition of wellbeing: "Harm is intolerable when it prevents the party harmed from doing minimally well, from enduring at a certain threshold of well-being. Bare survival is not enough" (CE 102).

Wellbeing constitutes a meaningful life. Put another way: a meaningful life for (at least some) nonhuman individuals might be understood as the fulfillment of bodily and social capacities, feeling connected to one another, and living healthfully to the extent they can. These characteristics are observable in ethological work and otherwise through careful attention toward nonhuman beings. Such social capacities, behaviors, and connectivity that contribute to nonhuman wellbeing are not unlike our own human search for meaning. Therefore, if wellbeing is compromised, we can justifiably expect meaning to be compromised.

Another way to talk about meaning is through the experience of joy, which is widely shared across species lines. Even though the happiness of nonhuman animals is contested theoretical terrain, Carl Safina writes that feeling joy and the enjoyment of life clearly give meaning. He comments that whoever cannot see joy in other beings is just not looking:

> You have to deeply deny the evidence to conclude that humans *alone* are conscious, feeling beings who can enjoy living and desire to continue doing so. In other words, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. People who play with a dog – or a squirrel or a rat – and then believe that the animal lacks consciousness, themselves lack a certain consciousness. (Safina 2015, 288)

As human animals, we often use the concept of happiness to convey our wellbeing. Joy gives shape and substance to our lives, and we often seek situations that bring us enjoyment for our physical and mental health. Nonhuman animals also pursue joy. If we understand happiness to be so influential to our own human meaning and wellbeing, how can we deny meaning to other animals who express joy?

Card's definition of genocide as social death has been transformative to genocide studies, aside from its possible application to nonhuman groups (which I will explore in detail in the following sections). Card's approach has been especially influential to refocus theorizing about genocide upon victims' experience, highlighting the need for a feminist account of the harm of genocide. Besides supporting an inquiry into the social vitality and imposed social death of nonhuman animals, Card's understanding of genocide as social death has greatly contributed to the field of genocide studies. Her approach is worth supporting because of her understanding of intent and the genocidal harms that linger past body counts.

As the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide is currently formulated, intention is primarily emphasized in determining the occurrence of genocide. This definition does not identify the specific harm that genocide inflicts upon its victims, as opposed to the harms of other crimes; phrases like "physical destruction in whole or in part" do not pinpoint how, exactly, genocidal violence is phenomenologically felt, and nor does "serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group" differentiate such harms from

other atrocities. Because these phrases are broad and unspecified, the identification of genocide instead emphasizes genocide as it is perpetrated rather than through its effects upon victims. Intent of the perpetrators, then, is suggested as a primary feature of genocide.

While intent is still a component of imposing social death, according to Card, her definition decentralizes this common conception of intention in the recognition of genocidal occurrences. By Card's characterization of genocide, we can name the harm of genocide by observing its *particular* effects. This is possible because the harm of genocide cannot be encompassed by any other harm. Social death is the central mechanism of genocide. By decentralizing intent in the definition of genocide, Card also avoids some of the problems that the UN Convention faces regarding intention. For the UN definition lacks clarification of the term "intent." How is intent to be determined, and what does it consist in? Card notes that though genocide scholars widely agree about including intention in any definition of genocide, they are divided about how "intent" is to be defined and proven. The UN definition hardly gives guidance. Card re-defines intention broadly, noting that the harms of genocide can be the primary aim, a means to achieve a further aim, a foreseeable outcome, or a reasonably foreseeable outcome even when it may not have been foreseen (CE 257). Intention is an important element of genocide, but Card's recharacterization both focuses upon victims' experience and broadens the scope of intentional acts.

The phrase "destroy in whole or in part" of the UN definition has also supported a dominant trend in genocide theorizing whereby genocide is often characterized and determined by the number of people killed. James Snow writes that this emphasis on body counts may come from the expertise of quantitative social scientists working on genocide. Because quantitative reasoning is respected as appealing to "impersonal science and consensus," the numbers of

people killed “are thought to be a reliable measure of the sheer magnitude of the evil of genocide” (Snow 2018, 136). Body counts have been used to compare genocidal instances, sometimes even to dismiss genocides because they are not of great enough magnitude. The concentration on body counts has also been used to cement the Holocaust as paradigmatic of genocide (Snow 2018, 136).

Card’s attention to social death moves the conversation from quantitative comparison to the qualitative plurality of experience. This attention beyond the body count is a feminist understanding of genocide: “What we notice, through a feminist lens, is influenced by long habits of attending to emotional response, relationships that define who we (not just women and girls) are, and the significance of the concrete particular” (Card 2003, 64). With the recognition that women and children are also often disproportionately affected by genocide, Card affirms victims’ experience of the loss of social vitality – the destruction of relationships that give their lives shape and meaning. Social death is not incurred merely by the physical death of one’s relationships, but the social harms that can make one’s life unlivable.

Rape, then, is affirmed as a genocidal act insofar as it forces social death. This is perhaps most clearly exemplified in the thousands of rapes, disembowelments, and genital mutilations of women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) that occurred as continuation of the Rwandan genocide. Besides the likelihood of experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in wake of the violence done them, women victims in the DRC are also socially isolated, often ostracized from their families because they are then seen as impure. Victims are dishonored, shamed, and deprived of social support. Cast out, they are at risk for further abuse (Human Rights Watch 2009).

Attending to the emotional response of victims, the relationships that define who they are, and the significance of their particular material lives, Card's understanding of genocide remains underappreciated. Its attention to material reality directs us to carefully examine the social vitality and concrete particularities of victim experience and the harms of genocide. This feminist examination of social vitality can also be addressed toward nonhuman animals. With social death and Card's broad characterization of intent as my frame, I inquire into the social lives of nonhuman animals, identifying manifestations of social death that may be genocidal.

One notable difficulty in employing Card's framework to instances of violence against nonhuman animals is that there is little public intuition about genocidal instances against nonhumans. Because her theory of genocide focuses upon human beings, her recognition of genocidal instances can rely upon prior societal intuitions about violence against other human beings. Although not necessarily widely reliable, there is a widespread sense of what the violence of genocide entails: that groups of people are targeted for their identities and suffer the imposition of social death via violence against them. Part of this "sense" is the awareness that genocide is commonly perpetrated by the state upon its own people. Card does not express this component of genocide in this way, instead identifying genocidal violence as "systematic" (CE 249). She does not further define her use of this word, although perhaps it touches upon these intuitions about genocide against human victims. I am not sure if Card would have agreed that genocide can only be perpetrated by a state government or state force; however, this assumed component of genocide is likely relevant to the evaluation of violence against nonhumans.

Perhaps we can understand "systematic" violence as perpetrated repeatedly by a group in a position of power. This would seem to echo the apparent reality that genocide is perpetrated by the state, a collection of people in a position of power. However, could a power minority or

single person ever commit genocide, perhaps in a single act of rage? Practically, such a situation is unlikely to be genocide because social vitality is actually quite robust. Genocide takes force and organization to commit. Card talks about some genocides as progressive violence, that genocide takes time to become full-blown genocide (CE 239). In formative stages, structures and organization may be created and implemented to enforce targeting. Before the Rwandan genocide officially began, for example, the Hutu government published propaganda that demeaned Tutsis and likened them to cockroaches, thereby encouraging mass violence against the Tutsi. Social death is imposed through repeated and often systemic means.

Genocide is not accidentally committed, even though under Card's broad definition of intention the harms of genocide can be auxiliary and not *explicitly* intended. An atrocity is genocide when it inflicts social death – even when that social death was not the primary or *conscious* intention of the perpetrated violence. So long as social death is a reasonably foreseeable outcome of the violence, the violent actions are candidates for being genocidal. Card asserts that no kind of (purported) unintentionality absolves a perpetrator from moral responsibility for their harms. Undesirable outcomes yet carry moral weight that Card wants to recognize as part of one's intent. Therefore, *reasonably foreseeable* harms are understood as equally constituent of intention as *explicit* intention.

Genocide targets victim groups for their identity as a group. Perpetrators often purport to target a group for reasons other than attempting to inflict social death, such as rationalizing vengeance or survival as justification for violence. But underneath this rationalization is a targeting of the victim group for *who they are* as a group, rather than for what the group has done. Genocide does not target random individuals, nor does it target coincidental aggregates of individuals. The targeting is not arbitrary and is tied to the identity of the victim group – that is,

victims are noninterchangeable to their perpetrators. Although a group's actions are inevitably connected to the identity of the group, genocide specifically aims at destroying victims because of the social vitality they possess. As I will discuss with coyotes, nonhumans are also targeted in this way, disliked for who they are. Such instances might be considered as genocide.

The instances of social death in nonhuman species that I will describe below share some common features. Importantly, these instances of social death have been imposed *by human action*. I have grouped my examples into categories that roughly describe the human mechanism that targets the animals and destroys their social vitality. If a group of nonhuman animals has social vitality and that social vitality can be forcibly diminished, then that group can also experience social death. In my examples, I have noticed that some social qualities are displayed across species. These qualities might be used to evaluate whether species I did not examine here can be said to have social vitality: presence of strong relationships identified by cooperation and grieving habits among group individuals; traditions or distinctive practices particular to groups within species; and social learning processes (accumulating knowledge of what to fear, traditions, or communication patterns).

These are likely not the only characteristics of social vitality, nor do I wish to require any specific criteria to indicate the presence of social vitality in nonhuman species. I present these evaluative criteria as an observation of the examples I have chosen, and as a starting point only. As ethological work continues to reveal groups' behaviors and social patterns in their own habitats, we will deepen our understanding of how social vitality displays among species groups and what features it shares across species designations. My decision to discuss these particular qualities and the species representatives below is due in large part because ethological information about their social lives is readily available.

Though my characterization of these criteria for social vitality might sound slippery, I wish to resist the kind of arbitrary line-drawing that has enabled the exclusion of nonhuman animals from moral consideration in the past. While Card's definition of genocide cannot be applied to every instance of violence against nonhuman animals, it is also inappropriate to demand a narrow conservative definition of genocide that immediately prevents the recognition of genocidal harms against nonhuman groups. Critical animal studies and ethology are growing areas of research that have challenged our assumptions about nonhuman animals greatly in recent years. In light of their fresh contributions to our understanding about the lives of nonhuman animals, we will avoid further entrenching unhelpful biases by holding open the door for continuing illuminations about the richness of nonhuman being-in-the-world.

For any instance of violence against human or nonhuman animals, there are three indicators of genocide: (1) the social death of a group that is at least a reasonably foreseeable outcome of a harm, (2) that a group is not random but targeted for *their identity* in the group, and (3) that the violence is *systematic*: structured and repeated violence perpetrated by another group in a position of power, often a state government or ruling body. Card is not explicit about these indicators in a logical manner, nor does she wish to identify these features as necessary or sufficient conditions for genocide. The reasoning behind this fluid description of genocide is to ensure that the definition of genocide is not so narrow to exclude any instances we otherwise identify as genocide. The challenge is both to adequately characterize genocide across its historical occurrences *and* to allow for the unique features of genocide that may be perpetrated currently or in future, such that those instances may also rightly be defined as genocide. Such analysis does not lend itself easily to requisite characteristics. However, it does seem that the

imposed social death of a group as a reasonably foreseeable outcome of the intention to commit violence against the group *is the shared, central aspect* of genocide.

In each of the following examples I evaluate, the unencumbered social vitality of these nonhuman animals is crucial to their wellbeing. I have recalled relevant ethological information about the lives of nonhuman animals to show their social vitality and the related social death imposed upon them by human violence. Then the task is to examine whether that social death, experienced by groups of nonhuman animals, is appropriately identified as genocide. Does the species display social vitality or show signs of social death? Was social death at least a reasonably foreseeable outcome of harm? Can the harm be considered systematic? Following Card's characterizations of social vitality and intention, we can begin to analyze how violence is felt by some nonhuman animals and inquire whether that violence is rightly called genocide.

Predator elimination programs: coyotes and wolves

Coyotes and wolves are deeply social animals, and both have been identified as closely similar to human beings in social structure, social intelligence, and adaptiveness (McIntyre 2019; Flores 2016). Both species are communally-based, living primarily in groups with family members, mates, and close companions. Coyotes often hunt alone, although they also regularly hunt in pairs and with pack members when pursuing particularly large prey. Wolves rely heavily upon collaboration with other pack members to survive and can only bring down a large prey animal by themselves if they are a very skillful, experienced hunter. Both coyotes and wolves pass information along to one another – laterally across pack members of similar age and also through generations. Coyote and wolf pups must learn virtually everything about their world from older members of their communities: they learn vocalizations, social structure and

comportment, traditions, hunting techniques, who their rivals are, and territory. This stretches beyond parental necessities as well; older coyotes and wolves mentor younger individuals to whom they may not be related. Coyotes and wolves are constituted through their relationships with one another, their strong social bonds and their place within their pack their identity.

In his book *Coyote America*, Dan Flores details the United States' long history of initiating governmental programs against wild animals. Federally-backed programs have targeted large predators for decades, including mountain lions, bears (grizzly, polar, and black), wolves, and coyotes. Since 1886, the government bureau currently called Wildlife Services, a division of the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, has consistently waged violence against coyotes across America. In Flores' words, the coyote has been viewed as a dangerous *archpredator* that deserves death (*Coyote America* 2016). Much like the language that sparked the mass extermination of wolves in the US, the rhetoric against coyotes targeted their *identities as coyotes*. What has always been a small concern about livestock losses to predators was dwarfed by a full-scale attack on the *species* – violent measures incited not for what coyotes have done, but simply for their presence upon American landscapes. In 2015, predation of livestock only accounted for two percent of cattle loss (USDA 2015). Further, early National Park Service management included the extirpation of predator species inside park boundaries, where livestock predation does not occur. Wolves and coyotes have been demonized far beyond their predation of livestock, called dangerous and unnecessary monsters on the landscape, a threat to wild prey animals and humans (Flores 2016). Today, Wildlife Services continues to deploy campaigns designed to "manage" "problem" wildlife, including against the coyote. Flores does not appear shy in recognizing this violence against coyotes as genocide, although he is more comfortable calling it "species cleansing" (Flores 2016, 115).

The explicit intention of these government programs, at least historically, is the elimination of the coyote species. Over the years, the bureau has used systematic hunting, poisoning, and sterilization tactics in the attempt to eradicate coyotes from the American landscape. Regional trophy-hunting practices and competitions have also been financially and rhetorically supported and by federal and state programs. But from the earliest days of the bureau, the fastest and most cost-effective method of violence was poison. Although many variants of poison cocktail have been left in carcasses for coyote consumption, a particularly virulent poison, strychnine, became commonplace in the early part of the 1900s. Death by strychnine is especially horrid, causing the coyote to convulse and asphyxiate in an erratic, curled-up posture. Other poisons, such as M-44 tubes of cyanide have also been used, planted in the ground smelling like meat (Flores 2016). Cyanide baits of various design continue to be implemented today. In addition to the deaths these poisons are meant to cause, the poison baits also kill other animals, including domestic animals. In 2017 an Idahoan boy was injured and watched his dog die from a cyanide bait in his backyard (Opar 2017).

Predator elimination programs cannot be cited as unintentional or even ignorant of the social vitality of the target animals. The social death of the animals is certainly a *reasonably foreseeable outcome* of waging violence against them. This is especially evident in the bureau's response to coyote social learning processes, for coyotes' adept social intelligence and connection to one another complicate the bureau's violent procedures. The elimination programs are shaped to actively work against the social vitality of coyote groups, because often their social vitality gets in the way of the human intention to kill them. Use of the strychnine poison created difficulties for the bureau when coyotes began to avoid the poisoned carcasses designed to bait them. After watching pack members ravaged by the poison, which has a relatively immediate

effect, coyotes learned to be skeptical of the poisoned carcasses that killed their compadres and of the smell of the baits (Flores 2016, 145). Wildlife Services then began to use thallium sulfate as their poison, which killed coyotes over the course of a few days so that the cause-effect between the bait and death was obscured. Thallium sulfate also attacked healthy coyote social practices, causing blindness and loss of foot pads and pelage that led to suffering, freezing, naked and blind coyotes huddled together (2016, 146).

Because of the systematic poisoning and shooting of pack members, coyotes and wolves lose the social guidance and membership from older pack members. The "problem" wolves and coyotes who prey on livestock usually do because their packs have been disrupted and youngsters have not learned the adequate skills for hunting wild, unconfined prey (McIntyre 2019). Shooting and trophy hunting only exacerbate fractured wolf and coyote social structure.

After the famous Yellowstone wolf 06 (Oh-Six) was shot in Wyoming, just outside of Yellowstone park bounds, her pack members experienced upheaval. 06's former mate 755 and daughter 820 were exiled by other pack members, which would not have happened without 06's unexpected death. Nate Blakeslee describes the moment just after the shooting, where the entire pack surrounded their dead leader's body and mourned her, even when they risked danger from being shot themselves (2017, 230). The main cause of death of wolves in Yellowstone National Park is violence of rival packs, which wolves grow up learning to expect and navigate (McIntyre 2019). But 755 and 820 were never able to rejoin each other or their remaining family members. Carl Safina asks, "Why can't this family get along? They did – before hunters shot up the pack" (Safina 2015, 217). This is striking given the strong bonds that wolves form with family and other pack members.

Although schisms within packs are not uncommon, rarely are communal loyalties decimated. Father and daughter became outcasts from their own family bonds. Their happy identities, created out of pack relationships, were shattered after losing 06. 06's family and pack experienced social death out of the trauma of her murder by a human hunter. Though this is but one individual story of social disintegration among wolves, we can be fairly confident that other wolf families and packs have been similarly affected by human hunters due to how important wolf relationships are.

While trophy hunting may masquerade as mere sport, the support for trophy hunts from governmental agencies clearly supports the systematic task of wolf removal. Again, this is a clear case where the destruction of wolves as a species is clearly and explicitly promoted and pursued. Predator elimination programs and their associated trophy hunts inflict social death, target particular predators for their identities, and are systematic. Meanwhile, the wolves and coyotes are individually, familially, and communally affected.

Poaching and commerce: elephants and whales

Poaching and hunting activities have incredible effect on species like elephants and whales. Yet these practices may not widely be seen as genocidal because the justification given for these practices is the instrumentalization of the animal's body: elephants are poached for their tusks and whales for their meat and blubber. It is less clear that the objective behind this violence against elephants and whales is to attack their social vitality, and yet observations of both elephants and whales reveals that they each suffer social death. This social death, imposed by the human-perpetrated violence of poaching and hunting, can be considered genocide because this social death is a *reasonably foreseeable outcome* of the violence against these species.

Whale hunting is legal (though regulated), but poaching is illegal by definition. Though restricted by governmental bodies, poaching is nevertheless supported through worldwide markets. Legitimate and illegitimate trade perpetuate violence as animal body parts are sold and bought regardless of national and international law. Because powerful economic structures encourage poaching and hunting, these activities can be called systematic.

For their highly-desired ivory tusks, elephants experience a loss of social vitality. When unimpeded by human violence, elephants live in family groups headed by a matriarch who is usually the eldest female. She is the keeper of traditional knowledge of the group, that she only passes on to her female successors. As the group roams, she directs their path to their heritage migratory routes and toward seasonal water sources. They are also highly emotionally intelligent and bond closely with their young and family members. Practicing intense grieving rituals, elephants return to dead companions' corpses and skeletons regularly and are known to carry reminders of their fallen companions with them, such as a jaw bone (elephants communicate with each other and show affection often by touching each other's mouths with their trunks). They sometimes bury their dead like humans do and have even been known to bury human bodies after their deaths.

After losing family members to poaching, elephant survivors "have elevated stress hormone levels for at least fifteen years, and give birth to fewer babies" (Safina 2016, 101). Losing a matriarch – usually the eldest female of a family group who is also the leader – causes the elephants loss of traditional, inherited knowledge. Baby elephants must be *taught* to fear lions and other dangers, even carrying transgenerational understandings of which humans are enemies as opposed to others who have not perpetrated violence against them. The maiming or death of a family member triggers "devastating psychological consequences" and, when elders

and matriarchs are killed, families are left unprepared and without valuable traditional information. Some families disintegrate, intensely suffering (Safina 2016, 40). Without their close bonds, elephants suffer and are unable to live according to their elephant customs. After the violence, they often struggle to create new relationships. This undoubtedly demonstrates a loss of social vitality.

Even aside from the suffering that individuals feel, it seems there is widespread evidence of social death in elephant groups. Charles Siebert writes about this sustained trauma, seen across Africa, India, and Southeast Asia, where "elephants have been striking out, destroying villages and crops, attacking and killing human beings" (Siebert 2006, 44). These normally playful giants are displaying vastly increased aggression against humans, which can be traced to the immense suffering that elephant groups experience at human hands. "Decades of poaching and culling and habitat loss… have so disrupted the intricate web of familial and societal relations by which young elephants have traditionally been raised in the wild, and by which established elephant herds are governed, that what we are now witnessing is nothing less than a precipitous collapse of elephant culture" (Siebert 2006, 44). Elephants remember their aggressors as they carry their trauma, and their social death is prompting their outrage against humans.

Whales also form strong social bonds with family pods and pass on regional traditions through social learning. Whales occupy traditional ocean territories, where a clan consisting of several pods inhabits occupies an area with different practices to clans in other territories. Orca clans, for instance, are part of one of 10 different "ecotypes" who all have different customs, eat different diets, and have differentiated communication patterns.

Young whales spend at least two years learning how to perfectly sing the unique call of their clan. Whale expert Shane Gero notes that sperm whales mark different cultures with

distinct sets of codas. He writes in his piece "The Lost Cultures of Whales," that "Families that share the same dialect we call a clan. The whale families in the Eastern Caribbean Clan use 22 different coda patterns…. Families that speak different dialects, from different clans, will never interact" (Gero 2016). Since whales must teach their cultural songs to their young, it is therefore very likely that whales indeed experience social death. The Eastern Caribbean Clan is diminishing every year because of human influence, and as Gero writes, "we are losing a way of life, a culture – the accumulated wisdom of generations on how to survive in the deep waters of the Caribbean Sea" (Gero 2016). As whales are hunted, knowledgeable elder clan members are unable to pass their traditional practices onto younger clan members.[4]

Whales grieve their wounded and dead and are highly empathic. An orca in the Pacific Northwest, J35, captured the world's attention in 2018 by carrying her newborn calf's corpse with her for 17 days (Yong 2018). In a species so highly emotional and relational, it is hard to imagine that their diminished social vitality does not cause them profound suffering. Whaling and other commercial practices inflict social death by killing and repeatedly injuring several species of whales (industrial fishing causes immense harm to whales through vessel strikes, catching them in nets, or noosing them with fishing line). Although grieving is not sufficient to indicate social death in nonhuman species, just as in humans, grieving does indicate strong connections between nonhuman animals and does strongly suggest social vitality. Social death is a kind of culture collapse: these individuals and families are unable to sustain their customary practices and teach cultural knowledge to their young.

The meat industry, pollution, and habitat destruction

This project of examining nonhuman animals' social vitality opens the scholarship toward further understanding of the social death that nonhuman groups experience at human hands. Once we recognize that other species groups suffer social death, further analysis is needed to determine when that social death has been imposed and can be identified as genocide. Guided by Card's framework, we can begin to analyze whether atrocities such as the current meat industry, pollution, and habitat destruction are genocidal. If these human-caused atrocities impose social death, they may be called genocide when the social death is at least reasonably foreseeable as a consequence of causing that harm. Although I do not have sufficient space to fully analyze these atrocities here, I at least wish to introduce them and briefly comment upon them since they are issues that deserve our serious attention.

In the case of the meat industry, it may be difficult to immediately see the social vitality of chickens, turkeys, pigs, cows, and other animals who are used and slaughtered daily because those animals are thoroughly controlled, confined, and "processed." This complete management of them actively prevents and damages their social vitality. Yet by observing species members outside of these confinements, we can determine what social vitality looks like for healthy populations and analyze whether current practices render the animals socially dead. These animals are *born into social death*, just as Patterson explains that the children of human slaves born into social death. Patterson describes this phenomenon of being born into social death as "natal alienation," whereby victims suffer the radical disconnection from their heritage and cultural identity. Card notes that natal alienation is a form of social death and is genocidal when it is coupled with intent (CE 264).

Another difficulty is that a prominent rationalization for these practices obscures the *reasonably foreseeable* occurrence of social death in factory farm animals. The objective of this industry is the instrumentalization of animal bodies for consumption, not specifically to destroy their social vitality. However, the destruction and prevention of animals' social vitality is often part of the practice of industrial farming. Traditionally, calves born to milking heifers are removed early or even immediately at birth so that mothers and offspring are unable to bond. Some heifers allowed to roam have hidden their newborn calves so that they will not be forcibly separated. This separation is an attack on the animals' natality: their ability to teach and connect with one another and to impart important information about how to live in the world.

Finally, a common problematic argument asserts that industrial farming cannot be wholly deplorable because it gives animals life by breeding them. I find this to be a confounding statement, as it implies that miserable life is unquestionably better than death. Unlivable life, life when socially dead, can hardly be said to be better than biological death. Many Holocaust victims committed suicide when they could (Lester 2004), suggesting that many people would prefer to be biologically dead rather than suffer harms that make their lives radically difficult to endure, harms that attack their ability to live meaningfully.

It is important to note that a farming practice that honors and protects the social vitality of its animals – one that does not impose social death upon them – would not be a genocidal practice. However, meat production would still rightly be mass murder, or perhaps some other kind of atrocity. The practice must actually impose (reasonably foreseeable) social death in order to be genocide. That is, some practices may include the murder and suffering of humans and nonhumans, but we identify genocide based upon the extent to which victims' social vitality is hindered. Mass shootings, such as the variety common in the United States wherein victims are

grouped by geographic proximity, are grievable atrocities, but they are not genocide because survivors and their families directly affected by the violence have meaningful social vitality outside of the victim group. Their social death is not inflicted upon them through such atrocities, although any murder and suffering is affecting and serious and is not trivial to undergo. The social death is not the primary aim of the shooting, nor is it a means, and neither is social death a reasonably foreseeable outcome.

Yet it is not simple to identify genocide, as not all situations that might be genocide are readily apparent. The challenge in recognizing genocide is that the instances we believe to be genocide are either already past or currently unfolding in history, and we can only examine the similarities of these violent atrocities to determine what differentiates genocide from other atrocities. Card's definition of genocide as social death, as well as her broad notion of intention, is designed to both observe the shared features of past genocidal violence and to allow room for the iterations of genocidal violence in the future. Because the UN's definition has allowed for the exclusion of some genocidal atrocities, it is important to embrace a broader definition that will illuminate genocides as they happen.

Importantly, Card's definition is not so loose as to be superfluous and claim that everything is genocide. Card writes that genocide is social death, but social death is not necessarily genocide. That is, social death, plus the intention to commit the action toward social death, is genocide. Some instances of social death that cannot be rightly called genocide are banishment, disfigurement, illness, and self-chosen isolation (Card 2013). Natural disasters could also cause social death, but these occurrences are not genocide because they are not humanly inflicted.

An interesting question does arise when considering natural disasters in our current climate crisis. Where does human culpability lie when those natural disasters are exacerbated or spurred by anthropogenic climate change? Natural disasters have increased in frequency and intensity due to human influence, and we also actively pollute and destroy habitats around the world. To what extent do these actions, which do not intend to cause social death, may be considered genocide? A more thorough analysis is required than what I can provide here, but certainly we can recognize that species already suffer social death because of human pollution and habitat destruction.

Whales are not only victims of targeted whaling efforts but are also suffering massive habitat loss. Orcas off the coast of Washington state have been dying, likely from a combination of disease and environmental factors like diminishment of their main food source, the Chinook salmon, and weakened immune systems due to industrial pollution. The orcas' home waters have increased six degrees in temperature (Robbins 2018). That water has warmed due to anthropogenic climate change. Whales are also vulnerable to plastic pollution, dying of starvation with bellies full of plastic trash (Borunda 2019).

In the past year, harrowing reports have also noted the massive death rates among insects – especially the colossal decrease in honey bee populations and the increased frequency of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). Although the exact causes of CCD are largely unknown, it is likely that human pesticide use and changes in habitat and climate are contributors to this collapse of honeybee society. At this point I am unaware of whether CCD can be considered social death by Card's definition, or how honeybees exhibit social vitality. The diminishment of insects and whales are possible cases of genocide that need further attention. If a species group experiences social death because of habitat destruction, pollution of their phenomenological

worlds, and the diminishment of their community groups, these instances of harm could be analyzed as genocidal.

Though species certainly suffer social death in the face of pollution and habitat destruction that has been spurred by human action, it is not immediately evident that these instances are rightly considered genocide. For, it may reasonably be argued, the diminishment of these species was accidental to the pollution and habitat destruction – and even the pollution and habitat loss itself may be unintentional to some other intended goal, viz. agriculture and economic gains. However, the burning of fossil fuels is something we have collectively known to damage planetary atmospheric health for almost 50 years, and we have since communally continued to support the fossil fuel industry. While not every earthly citizen has equally contributed to our current climate crisis, we can at least say that, *collectively*, devastating effects of our addiction to fossil fuels constitute a *reasonably foreseeable* outcome of our actions. We may not have intended climate change at the outset, but at this point we must admit our collective responsibility for instigating widespread ecological devastation, potentially including the burden of social death in some species.

Someone may respond to these concerns by invoking the Doctrine of Double Effect (DDE), which is a philosophical principle that is used to justify actions with unintended consequences. DDE applies to situations where an action produces a double effect; an action creates one consequence that is a desirable good effect and another consequence that is an undesirable bad effect. The doctrine is this: When an act will lead to both a good and a bad effect, it is permissible to perform that action only if (1) the act itself does not violate a moral principle, (2) the bad effect is itself not the means for achieving the good effect, (3) the actor only intends the good effect and does not intend the bad effect, even if it is foreseen or expected,

and (4) the good effect outweighs (or is at least equal to) the bad effect (Burnor & Raley 2018, 183).

DDE is frequently used to justify military bombings, where the collateral damage of killing civilians is an unfortunate outcome of targeting and removing a terrorist. The DDE is also commonly at work in contemporary climate issues to justify harmful practices such as investment in fossil fuels and other short-term solutions. These practices seem to greatly benefit human wellbeing, and climate change is an unintended negative effect of these practices. However, this is not an appropriate application of the DDE because an investment in fossil fuels is not actually of great benefit to human wellbeing. We know that a globally warming climate is in fact disastrous for all of us. DDE fails to justify the continued polluting and habitat destruction of our fossil fuel addiction because the good effect does not outweigh the bad effect.

Besides this inapplicability, I do not think the DDE is an honest or admirable justification for harmful actions. Card also dismisses the DDE as a viable justification for undesired and supposedly unintended consequences. DDE absolves the actor of their moral responsibility in causing the negative effect, which Card does not accept. She writes, "if one can foresee the harm that will result from one's act and one chooses to do it anyway, one is accepting that harm as part of the price of one's deed [….] One may not like the fact that such harm results, and one might never have chosen to cause such harm as either an end or a means. Nevertheless, one accepts it, and that is a moral choice" (CE 258). Especially when individuals' lives and social vitality are at stake, it is inexcusable to shrug off one's moral responsibility for inflicted harms. The horrific harms of genocide are too great to be dismissed as an unfortunate result.

I have attempted to address the limits of a Cardian understanding of genocide as they have arisen in this paper. Because "genocide" is controversial and simultaneously immensely important, theorizing about it is tricky and weighted. Questions about genocide cannot be settled without thorough attention to individual atrocities and their specific harms. Whether "genocide" can be properly used to discuss any atrocity requires this careful assessment of past and current atrocities, as well as a willingness to see genocidal characteristics across violent instances despite their incongruent contextual features.

One evident limit of this Cardian approach to genocide, especially when one takes seriously nonhuman animals and entities, is that it is focused upon the lives of social animals. If genocide is social death, and not merely the intentional physical murder of any species, clearly genocide à la Card can only be perpetrated against social animals. Of course, all animals are social to an extent, if only to mate and propagate their species. Yet not all animals derive their identity and meaning from social relationships. With Card's definition, more solitary animals or animals for whom social vitality is not constitutive of their lives are animals who cannot be victims of genocide.

However, this limit to genocide as social death hardly seems a limit at all. It is a mistake to think that only atrocities termed "genocide" can and should impel our moral attention. Card is adamant in her writing that atrocities are quite common and that we should not be blind to instances of torture and murder simply because they are widespread. "There is a danger of conflating 'ordinary' with 'normal' or 'natural'" (CE 24). The frequency of the occurrence of atrocities does not absolve us of our moral responsibility. Although atrocities against animals who do not suffer social death is not genocide, it is not to be overlooked. "Genocide" need not perfectly capture every ghastly atrocity. It is, instead, a perception of a particular kind of harm.

Violence toward nonhumans must be taken seriously by recognizing the shared practices and logical mechanisms that are used against both human and nonhuman groups. One powerful way we engage in this recognition is through our rhetoric. Language contributes to and re-produces reality, and we should choose language that illuminates rather than obfuscates where and how oppression iterates. Some advocates, especially in critical animal studies, want to use terms such as "genocide" to reveal the anthropocentrism in our language. The central task seems to be opening our language to its appropriate use in discussing nonhuman lives: "in order to have any heuristic value at all, our language must respect the peculiarities of a species while framing them in a way that strikes a cord in the human experience" (De Waal 2006, 63). Because we live on the same planet and have evolved in common with other animal species for millions of years, our language should be used to reflect our shared experiences across species lines – including the ways we suffer violence.

The risk of social death is too great to have a conservative view of genocide. Those who wish to defend a conservative, anthropocentric use of the term "genocide" must provide sufficient justification for why we ought *not* be concerned about the social death of marginalized human and nonhuman groups. A definition of genocide as social death, with Card's broader notion of intent, allows us to recognize shared mechanisms of violence against marginalized humans and nonhuman animals. Speaking of "genocide" against nonhuman animals decenters our anthropocentrism in acknowledging the social vitality of our fellow creatures.

[1] I recognize that other scholars have used the term "Holocaust" to describe violence against nonhuman animals. This paper focuses specifically on the word "genocide" and its use and usefulness to describing these situations. Insofar as the terms "Holocaust" and "Shoah" are employed to indicate similar features between that atrocity of genocide during German National Socialism and particular violence against nonhumans, I think that the comparison can be made responsibly. Indeed, the Shoah has much history in common with treatment of nonhuman animals since eugenics rose to prominence through the work of animal husbandry and breeding experts, and the engineering of the death camps were inspired by Henry Ford's assembly line modeled after an American slaughterhouse (these and

other relevant details on this topic can be found in Charles Patterson's *Eternal Treblinka,* 2002). However, I find that the application of "genocide" to nonhuman contexts is much more useful, for reasons I discuss in the section "Nonhuman social death."

[2] One way we might conceive of such a species-wide social vitality is if a species has very few surviving members. Yet current ethological evidence suggests that for most species, social vitality is built in smaller community groups.

[3] This also helps us to avoid some of the problems in the debate regarding use of the term "species" and "speciation," i.e. that such terms unfairly limit or obscure the material existence of the individuals and the relationships between those individuals that the terms attempt to describe.

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