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Sexualized violence and the gendered commodification of the animal body in Pacific Northwest US dairy production

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This article draws on a case study of bovine life in the US dairy industry to observe the power relations and violent networks of commodification involved. I use the terms *gendered commodification* and *sexualized violence* to understand the lives of animals in the industry and the discourses that are employed to reproduce its practices. Focusing on sex and gender, concepts which have long been classic in feminist geography, this article explores the sexually violent commodification of both female and male animals in dairy production. In addition to the ways in which both are exploited for their productive and reproductive capacities, male animals are also discursively conceptualized as perpetrators of the violence against the females. This article engages with geographies of the body and animal geographies in order to extend geographies of the body to other-than-human bodies and in order to feature the body more prevalently in animal geographies. This attention to the animal body ultimately reveals the pervasiveness of sexual violence and the consequences of gendered commodification for both nonhuman and human others.

Keywords: global intimate; dairy; the body; animal geographies; agriculture; food

A Holstein cow with ear tag #1389 limped into the 'livestock' auction pen. Much of her history could be easily read on her body. Her tail was docked, her back leg severely lame and not bearing weight, her udders were red and hung to the ground with little elasticity. Her ribs protruded from her sides and the detailed contours of her hip bones were fully visible beneath the skin. Her hide was scarred with wounds and abrasions in various stages of healing. Her ears were tagged with an identification number from the dairy farm and a sticker displaying numbers and a barcode unique to the auction yard stuck to her side. The auctioneer opened the bidding at 20 dollars per hundred pounds of body weight. No one bid and the price dropped quickly to 15 dollars, then 10 dollars and finally to five dollars per hundred pounds. No one bid. At 700 pounds, the cow did not sell for 35 dollars. When the auction workers moved to herd her out the door, she struggled to move forward and collapsed in the pen. The auctioneer's voice paused and then said, 'Well, let 'er rest, I guess.' She lay there in the pen as the auction continued and other 'spent dairy cows' were bought and sold around her. After all, she was only one cow in a stream of 60 others sold in that same hour. Eventually, frightened by one of the cows, she rose and limped out of the auction pen into the holding pen in back. When the auction workers returned to work the next morning, the cow with ear tag #1389 was dead.[1]

Introduction

As the vignette above demonstrates, animal bodies are publicly visible in spaces like the auction yard, making them an accessible site to explore the consequences of

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commodification for the individual's life and body. Understanding this commodification is important both for the sake of the individual animals laboring and dying within the industry and for the more extensive project of uncovering the consequences of gendered commodification of all bodies – nonhuman and human – and the violent power structures to which they are subjected. Animal bodies, and particularly *farmed* animal bodies, are subject to mundane, routinized forms of violence in everyday agricultural practice. This article analyzes male and female bovine bodies in the US dairy industry in order to reveal that this violence is highly sexualized and perpetuated by the commodification of the productive and reproductive capacities of these bodies in spaces of food production. Drawing from classic themes in feminist geography, I argue that *gendered commodification* and *sexualized violence* help to explain and make sense of narratives about violence and the animal body. These themes frame the stories of cows, bulls, and calves in the industry and produce the animal-as-commodity through an analysis of (1) their lived realities and (2) the discursive narratives of gendered commodification and sexualized violence in the industry. It is through the gendered particularities of animals' lived experience that we can begin to understand the more extensive structural violence to which these and other bodies are subjected.

The particular ways in which male and female bovine bodies are appropriated in the dairy industry are fueled by the drive to maximize productivity and efficiency in a highly industrialized, capitalist food system. But the biological animal bodies on which the industry relies have inherent natural limits that are in constant tension with industry tenets of increased efficiency. Bodies, pushed to capacity, break down, and when these bodies break down, they are slaughtered to eke out the last bit of capital in the form of meat, skin, and offal[2] (see Shukin 2009 for discussion of 'animal capital'). Dairy producers employ the latest technologies in a dance to push the body to its productive/reproductive limit while simultaneously working to extend the productivity and profitability of each body before slaughter (Twine 2010).[3]

This article draws on nine months of combined fieldwork and textual analysis located primarily in the Pacific Northwestern USA. I conducted fieldwork at sanctuaries for formerly farmed animals in Northern California, a small-scale dairy farm and auction yards in Washington, and the Washington State Fair, and traveled to the World Dairy Expo in Wisconsin to observe national and international industry trends. Fieldwork involved in-depth interviews with dairy farm and sanctuary workers and participant observation on farm and sanctuary tours, where I openly disclosed my position as a researcher. I attended public 'livestock' auctions, the State Fair, and the World Dairy Expo, and observed and collected free industry literature from these spaces. Textual analysis involved a content and discourse analysis of web and print industry materials, which included marketing and advertising materials for various dairy industry products and technologies, catalogs for products associated with the industry, and instructional materials from the industry itself (gathered online and at the Expo), and also from university agricultural extension programs (e.g., how-to guides for artificial insemination or common practices for feeding and raising calves for the dairy industry). To provide further context for the project, I reviewed federal and state legal documents (e.g., the Animal Welfare Act, the Humane Methods of Livestock Slaughter Act, state exemptions commonly referred to as 'Common Farming Exemptions'). My aim during the research process was not to focus on or uncover the exceptional cases of cruelty or gross animal welfare violations that regularly occur in the industry; instead, my research is concerned with observing data drawn from across these various modes of observation to understand the everyday, lived realities of animals in the industry and

the way technology is employed to augment the productivity and reproductivity of their bodies.

My analysis primarily engages with two geographical literatures – geographies of the body and animal geographies – in an attempt to enrich each through engagement with the other. Geographies of the body draw attention to the 'geography of the closest in' and allow us to see the ways in which macroprocesses (e.g., political economy, commodification) shape and impact individual lives (Rich 1986; Longhurst 2005). Animal geography scholars argue that we should engage in scholarship that 'journey[s] across the species divide to construct a more inclusive social theory' (Wolch and Emel 1995, 632). Furthermore, the 'global intimate' acts as a frame within which to understand macroprocesses through the body and vice versa (Mountz and Hyndman 2006; Pratt and Rosner 2012). In the spirit of the 'global intimate', I take on the project of pushing that approach forward with geographies of the animal body in order to tell a story about dairy specifically, and about the consequences and pressures of gendered commodification and global political economy more generally.

'Feminism', as Donna Haraway writes, 'is a story-telling practice' (1989, 255). Following this tradition, I tell a particular story about the consequences of human–animal relations in the production of food commodities. This article expresses the gendered social relations at work in the industry – namely, that female and male animals are both unique subjects of sexualized violence and gendered commodification based on their individual bodies and reproductive capacities. Interestingly, in addition to being subjects of gendered commodification and sexualized violence themselves, male animals are also discursively employed by the industry to take responsibility for the violence occurring against the female animal body. While the story told here focuses on bovine bodies in the dairy industry as a case study, this narrative is more broadly relevant for understanding the feminist project of uncovering gendered commodification and sexualized violence, and its potential for expanding our circles of who we care for and about.

To begin, I locate this argument within a geographical theoretical frame – geographies of the body and animal geography – and provide an example of literature outside of geography that has engaged with this project of exploring the animal body as a feminist site of inquiry. Next, I recall the story of how animals live in the dairy industry and review the everyday practices to which they are subjected. The third part of this article explores the ways in which the story is enriched by the discursive narratives at work to simultaneously express and conceal the gendered violence against the animal and the way the bull is discursively constructed to take responsibility for this violence. Finally, in reviewing the way animals live in the industry and the discourses that work to maintain and reproduce these lives, the gendered and sexualized violence of the commodification is better understood as a means to connect the global and the intimate.

Toward a 'global intimate' animal geography

The consequences of commodification for bovine animals in the dairy industry are seen through a material and discursive analysis that features the gendered commodification and sexualized violence against these bodies. In the process, drawing on geographies of the body and animal geographies identifies a gap in each – namely, that geographies of the body often do not tend to extend to bodies beyond the realm of human, and animal geographies tend not to focus closely on the body itself. Bringing together these two literatures, I offer an analysis that extends work on bodies to more-than-human subjects and features the body as an important site of analysis for animal geographers.

While the everydayness of *human* embodiment has been well theorized (e.g., Nast and Pile 1998; McDowell 1999), I stress here the nonhuman body as a no less important site of inquiry. This everydayness of being embodied, combined with the mundane (and at times painful) realities of our bodies breaking down, aging, getting injured, etc., is a potential site for empathizing with human and nonhuman others and expanding our circle of who we care for and about to more distant others, like the cow. Honing in on the gendered/sexualized component of thinking about these bodies, I draw attention to a specificity of everyday experience: the body as an important site for understanding the gendered, sexed subject (Longhurst 2005). In addition to drawing attention to the body for the sake of understanding the individual subject, this analysis makes connections across scales in order to theorize the intimate and the global as mutually produced (Mountz and Hyndman 2006; Pratt and Rosner 2012). In the case of bovine animals in the dairy industry, the body is literally an intimate subject of gendered commodification and it is *through* spaces like farms, auction yards, expos, and the body spaces of humans in the industry that the animal is materially and discursively constructed and reproduced as a gendered commodity in the global political economy. In order to 'make theory out of the practices of the everyday' (Pratt and Rosner 2012), attention to the animal body reflects the uneven power relations at work in commodifying the gendered animal body and the sexualized violence that results from these power relations.

Animals are commodified annually by the billions in global spaces of food production in the case of breeding, confinement raising, commodity extraction, and slaughter (Emel and Neo 2011). Because of the ubiquity of animal use in these and other ways, animal geographers have argued that, as scholars and people, we have an intellectual and ethical responsibility to 'closely consider these lives' (Wolch and Emel 1998; Seager 2003; Holloway 2007). Scholars of domestication have argued that domestication processes express power (as dominance and submission) and physical mutation with potentially deleterious effects on animal lives but have not looked explicitly at sexualized violence against these bodies (e.g., Anderson 1997; Tuan 2004). Other efforts to move beyond the animal-as-commodity feature the social relations between humans and animals (e.g., Haraway 2003); the political processes to which animals are subject (e.g., Hobson 2007); and, occasionally, the body and sexuality of the nonhuman other (e.g., Brown and Rasmussen 2010). Furthermore, a geographical work on the way biotechnology impacts human and animal lives and bodies has focused on the integration of technologies of production and extraction on animal lives (e.g., Coyle 2006; Holloway 2007). This integration of technology (e.g., artificial insemination, milking machines, semen extraction) is fraught with complex ethical and power relations between humans and animals (Holloway 2007), and these modes of power and regulation of bodies would benefit from a gendered analysis, like the one undertaken in this article.

'Animals have been so indispensable to the structure of human affairs and so tied up with our visions of progress and the good life that we have been unable to (even try to) fully see them' (Wolch and Emel 1998, xi). For this reason, this article takes up the project of making visible the intimate animal upon which this global structure relies. Seeing – really seeing – the cow used for dairy in her last moments at the auction yard gives us powerful entry into understanding the violence of the mundane, everyday system. Through attention to the animal's body and the daily practices and discourses governing that body, we have the opportunity to really *see and understand* the animal as commodity, her lived daily experience, and her place in broader human–animal relations. Thus, attention to the body takes us beyond one-dimensional understandings of the animal-as-resource/commodity and uncovers the *consequences* of this commodification.

Some feminist scholars outside of geography have engaged in analyses that feature *the body* and *the animal* together. However, they have been less concerned with geographical analyses that make explicit connections between the global and the intimate rooted in the everyday. These scholars have argued that the effects of gendered commodification and violence against the animal are readily visible at the site of the body, but their attention is disproportionately aimed at understanding how the *female* animal body is exploited for its (re)productive capabilities (e.g., Adams 1990; Gruen 1993; Davis 1995). And for good reason, the lives of female animals in the food industry create great cause for concern. While hens raised for eggs are generally understood to be the most intensely exploited of all female animals, sows used for breeding in the pork industry and cows in the dairy industry are also subjects of invasive and violent appropriation of their lives and bodies[4] (Gruen 1993). Female farmed animals' lives are dictated by their productive and reproductive capabilities and female animals in the food industry experience a highly gendered commodification based on their sex. Much of this feminist work is supported by exposing the overt and implicit misogyny visible in the discursive and material practices of animal use (Haraway 1989).

In part, this article confirms these results; in other words, this analysis documents the misogyny at work in the sexually violent commodification of the female animal body. But a narrative of dairy production that begins and ends with the female is an incomplete story of the consequences of commodification of animal lives. A close, gendered analysis of both the lived experience of the animals in dairy production and the discourses at work in the industry reveals that a more nuanced and complex understanding of commodification is needed. While female animals are more obviously subjects of gendered commodification and violence, male animals, too, experience a gendered appropriation of their lives and bodies. Male animals are routinely culled at birth (e.g., male chicks in the egg industry), raised in confinement for meat (e.g., veal), and are used for their reproductive capabilities (e.g., semen extraction). Both male and female bodies – adult and adolescent – are commodified in specific ways unique to their productive and reproductive capabilities and are subjects of sexualized violence in the industry. Attention to the often-forgotten male animal body resonates with (and extends) the growing geographical literature on masculinities and the human male body (e.g., Connell 1995; Dutton 1995; Bordo 1999). The male animal body is commodified in its own right and the bull is simultaneously discursively employed to take responsibility for the sexual violence against the female body through the construction of the hypermasculine, virile *male*. Furthermore, attention to both male and female animal bodies in the context of linking them to the global provides a much needed geographical analysis. With this framing, I now turn to the story of the lived realities of the animals in the dairy industry and the industry discourses that work to reproduce these realities.

Bovine lives in the dairy industry

The life of the 'dairy cow'[5]

The cow with ear tag #1389 in the vignette above represents the quintessential US 'dairy cow'. She is an adult female black and white Holstein (a breed which comprises 90% of the US dairy herd) (EPA 2012) sent to auction to be sold for slaughter when her body was deemed 'spent'. The story mapped onto her body is not unusual; on the contrary, the scars, the lameness, the mastitis,[6] her docked tail, and her presence at the auction represent the nearing of the end of the majority of cows' lives at any scale of dairy production. In other words, her body in this space represents the everydayness – the mundane experience – of life as a cow in the dairy industry.

Assuming the cow with ear tag #1389 had a typical life on a small or industrial scale dairy farm, she, herself, would be the result of a long line of genetic selection of dairy breeding chosen over generations to select for qualities like volume of milk production (10 times the normal amount needed to sustain a calf), milk taste, temperament. In other words, her body, to begin with, would be the result of human interference, breeding, and selection for traits deemed desirable and profitable for commodity production.

When she reached 15 months of age, she would be impregnated through artificial insemination for the first time. Artificial insemination is the most common method of reproducing cows in the dairy industry. To artificially inseminate a cow, the farmer inserts his/her left hand into the cow's rectum in order to manipulate the reproductive tract (DeJarnette and Nebel 2012). Meanwhile, the right hand is inserted into the cow's vagina and an insemination gun is used to reach the cervix. Once the gun has been maneuvered through the cervix, the semen is deposited into the uterine body (DeJarnette and Nebel 2012).

With a nine-month gestation period, she would give birth for the first time (usually to a single calf) at 24 months. Three weeks before giving birth, she would be moved into a 'maternity pen' with other cows nearing their due dates. When the time came, she would be isolated and monitored while she gives birth to her calf. Several hours after the calf is born, it would be taken away from the cow and she would be moved into the milking string. If the calf were female, she would be raised there on the dairy farm, sold to another dairy farm, or raised by a heifer-growing contractor off-site. She would be fed discarded milk or milk replacer and weaned at 6–8 weeks of age after which she would be group housed until she reached a reproductive age. Just before weaning, she would be dehorned, vaccinated, and have any extra teats removed (EPA 2012).

According to an interview with one life-long dairy farmer, cows typically bellow consistently for their absent calves for a full two weeks after the calves are taken from them (Homer Weston,[7] personal communication [Interview in Bellingham], May 16 2012). After the calf is removed, even on a small farm,[8] the cow would likely be confined to a barn. From there, she and the other cows would be taken two (or more likely, three) times per day into the milking parlor, attached to machines, and milked. Most dairy farms have shifted to the use of the milking machines, rather than milking cows by hand, in the squeeze for greater efficiency. Milking 'parlors' are the rooms or barns where the milking machines are housed and can be laid out in a number of different ways – in rows of varying lengths or in circular, rotating layouts. The cows are herded into the parlor in groups and human handlers clean each cow's teats and attach teat cups to the cow's nipples. The cups suction onto the nipples and the machine begins to pump milk out of the cow's udders into a tube that feeds the milk into a collection vat where it begins the process of pasteurization and processing. This process is extremely painful if the cow has mastitis. When the milking is complete, the machine is detached from the cow's teats and the cows are herded back into their main pen where they await their next milking. Increasingly, this process is becoming more automated with automated milking systems becoming more popular in order to further eliminate human labor (Holloway 2007).

About 60–90 days after the cow gives birth, she would be artificially inseminated again and continuously milked through her pregnancy until 60 days before giving birth (the 'drying off' period). This cycle of artificial insemination, birth, and milking would be repeated for several years until lameness, mastitis, infertility, and/or declining milk production set in. These conditions are common in cows used for dairy because of the immense physical strain and nutrient depletion (hence their frequent emaciated appearance) caused by the excessive milking and forced impregnation inherent in the

industry. At this point, the farmer would make a careful calculation of her profitability as a milk producer weighed against the cost of maintaining her. When she is deemed 'spent', she would end up at auction, or she might be sent directly to the slaughterhouse. If the cow with ear tag #1389 had not failed to sell at the auction yard, she would have been purchased for slaughter and her body would have become ground beef. What parts of her body did not end up as ground beef would have gone to a rendering facility and into the production of leather, fertilizer, cosmetics, glue, and pharmaceuticals (EPA 2012). The fetishization of these commodity products enables their use without ever thinking of the bodily suffering of the cow. And yet, the commodification of the cow is so complete in life and again in death that at no point is her life and body her own.

The life of the bull

While some male dairy calves are castrated and raised as steers for beef, the majority are raised for veal and live short, isolated lives of confinement precisely *because* they are male and have no functional use to the dairy industry. Selling these calves for veal and beef is an attempt by the dairy industry to eke capital from what would otherwise be considered a 'waste product'. Some male calves are of such low value to the industry that they die or are killed at birth onsite and their bodies are composted on the farm or sent to rendering.

Increasingly, veal producers in the Pacific Northwest work directly with dairy farms to buy day-old calves, though participant observation in auction spaces revealed that some day-old male calves with their umbilical cords still attached do end up at auction. Calves raised for veal are housed in indoor crates, indoor pens, or hutches. In each case, calves are housed alone for fear that group housing encourages the spread of disease. Made from polyethylene plastic, the increasingly common 'calf hutch' can be used indoors or outdoors and be easily disassembled, cleaned, and reassembled as needed (Calf-Tel® 2012). Calves are commonly tethered with chain to the front of hutches so that they can move inside, and take a few steps outside, the hutch. However, according to one Calf-Tel® representative at the World Dairy Expo, calves regularly hang themselves on these chains (since calves tend to playfully jump around while trying to reach the calves in the hutches neighboring them) (Calf-Tel® 2012). For this reason, the Calf-Tel® representative recommended a small fenced-in enclosure containing the calf in the hutch. To produce veal, calves are raised in these hutches for 4–6 months with extremely limited mobility so as to keep their flesh tender before they are slaughtered. On some farms, calves will be group housed in a larger hutch or pen with other calves once the threat of contamination has passed.

Ethical concerns arising in the 1980s and 1990s about the treatment of calves for veal have created an interesting paradox in the industry. When asked what happens to male calves born on the farm, one dairy farmer replied that they are sold to a livestock buyer who comes to the farm. He further elaborated that he did not know what the calves were used for once they left the farm. Though, when asked if they were used for veal, he replied hurriedly that the farm had nothing to do with veal, nor did they want anything to do with veal. Thus, the industry itself seems to operate publicly on a 'don't ask, don't tell' policy regarding their connection to spaces of veal production. In reality, the dairy industry relies heavily on the veal industry's ability to take male calves that are useless in dairy production.

A small percentage of male calves are raised for breeding as 'natural service bulls' and an even smaller percentage from cows with an exceptional pedigree are raised for use by semen suppliers for artificial insemination (EPA 2012). Bulls used for semen collection

are forcibly ejaculated 2–3 times per week and 2–3 times per collection day using one of two methods: an artificial vagina (AV) or electroejaculation (Rouge 2002). In the case of the AV, a trained steer is used as a 'teaser' to arouse the bull. The bull is aroused by several false mounts of the steer and, once the penis is erect, a human handler steps in and diverts the penis into the AV, which uses 'thermal and mechanical stimulation to stimulate ejaculation' (Rouge 2002).[9] Electroejaculation is performed by inserting an electric probe into the rectum against the prostate of the bull. This probe delivers a series of electrical currents to the prostate and causes the bull to involuntarily ejaculate (Rouge and Bowen 2002). Inevitably, the bull's virility eventually declines, after which they are deemed no longer productive and are sent to slaughter.

Bulls were formerly kept on their home dairy farms for this process, but increasing division in the industry, resulting from the squeeze for greater economic efficiency, means that bulls are more regularly housed on breeding farms that specialize in semen production and store large tanks of each bull's semen in cold storage for later sale and use. This division is largely due to economic efficiency, but it has also fueled the creation of a new, now-essential market for bull semen as a commodity. Bull semen has become an internationally traded commodity and semen is shipped from suppliers for use in impregnating cows on dairy and beef operations around the world (Johnson 2012).

The political economy of industrial agriculture is made intimate in this descriptive narrative of the lived realities of the cow, the calf, and the bull in spaces of milk, veal, and semen production. The impacts of these various practices resonate across scales, tying global processes (e.g., political economy, structural violence, industrialization) and markets (e.g., semen as an international trade commodity) to the individual body (e.g., the highly intimate experience of the cow losing her calf hours after birth or the pain experienced by the bull during electroejaculation). The intimate and emotional nature of these embodied connections is laid bare here in stark contrast with the cold humor of industry discourses explored in the next section. Whereas the description of the animals' lived experience is distinctly geographical in its grounded violence (through the use of the animal body in spaces of production), the discourses revealing the gendered commodification and sexualized violence attempt to detach the viewer from the actual embodied, placed animal as a means to obscure the violence of the process. Thus, these industry discourses are essential for understanding how the violent human–animal relations in the industry are maintained and reproduced.

Discourses of sexualized violence and gendered commodification

Haraway writes, 'Stories are material practices [. . .] Discourses are not only social products, they have fundamental social effects [. . .] Scientific discourses both bound and generate conditions of daily life for millions' (1989, 289). Discourse is also the process by which meaning is made through the use of language and the production of 'commonsense' narratives (Foucault 1978). Dominant institutions, like animal agriculture, exert power through producing and maintaining these narratives about bodies and practices. Some of these discourses are as old as animal husbandry itself and are tied up in ancient religious beliefs about human–animal relations (see Kemmerer 2011). Others are traced to more contemporary beliefs about the need for animal protein in human diets and the highly political promotion of this narrative by meat and dairy industry groups and the US federal government's nutritional guidelines (Nestle 2002). Popular discourse about dairy and meat production, for instance, does highly effective work to reproduce the *status quo* in the form of stories told about animal welfare, 'happy cows', and 'happy meat' (for interesting work

on this subject, see Glenn 2004; Cole 2011).[10] The everyday, mundane practices of farming do not continue without a powerful set of discourses to reproduce them. Farming discourses about animal use simultaneously conceal and reveal the violence at work in the system. The violence is concealed through language that implies improved animal welfare, technological innovation, and care (Glenn 2004; Cole 2011). In the case of the dairy industry, colloquial industry discourses and practices demonstrate how this commodification and violence is simultaneously revealed and concealed.

Industry discourses of gendered commodification

Widely distributed, public industry advertising materials make readily visible the gendered commodification of the animal body in dairy production. The World Dairy Expo, held in Madison, Wisconsin, is a site where this commodification is expressed in rich detail. Vendors peddling the latest technologies for dairy producers line the halls of the Expo grounds. The latest state-of-the-art milking machines, calf-feeding machines, housing and bedding options for cows and calves, colostrum and milk replacement products, flavor additives to encourage calves to drink nonbovine milk, manure waste management systems, pharmaceutical products for animal care, and semen sale companies are just a handful of the offerings at the Expo.

Industry discourses, such as those on offer at the Expo, conceptualize the female cow in terms of her productivity, and the literature promoting a viral combination vaccine, called Bovi-Shield GOLD®, emphasizes the industry preoccupation with the cow as a reproductive entity. In one advertisement, the text reads, 'If she can't stay pregnant, what else will she do? Keep your cows pregnant and on the job. [. . .] Ask your Pfizer Animal Health representative how to protect her pregnancy, your reproductive program and your bottom line' (Pfizer 2012). And another booklet advertising the same product states that 'pregnancy loss is all too common. [But] it doesn't have to be. [. . .] $200 to $400: the value of each pregnancy' (Pfizer 2011).

Thus, her value is explicitly tied to her function as a reproductive machine. The assumption in these texts is that a cow's purpose for living is to 'stay pregnant'. A dollar value is placed not only on her body as a reproductive unit but also on each individual pregnancy. This is certainly a reflection of the economic interests of an industry driven by a close profit margin and the need to maximize the capital extracted from each body. Indeed, if a cow becomes infertile, or if a female calf is born sterile, her only remaining function is to be slaughtered and sold for her flesh. This industry discourse is also more generally a reflection of the way the female animal body is viewed – that because biologically she *can* reproduce, 'staying pregnant' must be the inherent function and purpose of her life.[11]

Semen catalogs are also a source from which to understand the varied gendered commodification of both the male and female bovine body. Bulls in semen catalogs are commodified for their reproductive prowess, appearance, genetic heritage, and the quality and virility of their semen. In one Select Sires (2012) catalog for show-quality bulls, a bull named Alexander 'puts the stamp of dairyness on his daughters like no other'. GW Atwood is 'the hottest bull to hit the type market in years [. . .] he makes the kind you can have fun with'. Sanchez 'makes them special – tall, dairy and strong with beautiful udders'. From Governor, who has 'greatness in his genes', one can expect daughters with 'youthful mammary systems that catch the eye and stand the test of time'. Java makes cows with 'great rear udders and attractive rumps'. In each example, the bulls are given credit for the physical and reproductive traits of future cows and there is a highly gendered

and sexualized undertone at work here. This is one example where the bull is made to take responsibility for the reproductive process in the suggestion that the bull actually 'makes' these cows and the more implicit move is made to set the bull up to take responsibility for any violence that may occur in this reproductive process.

An emphasis on the udders and mammary systems as a fetishized trait of commodity production is further expressed in catalog images of cows with engorged udders and tails pushed aside to display prominently the cow's vagina (e.g., Select Sires 2012). Images like this one emphasize the promise of excessive commodity production (after all, big udders are suggestive of high milk production). However, the images of the udders also call up the popular fetishizing of large-breasted women, and the advertisements are reminiscent of familiar popular sexualized discourses about women. 'Youthful mammary systems that catch the eye and stand the test of time', calls up a cultural preoccupation with perky breasts and eternally youthful female bodies – bodies that can maintain an attractive, youthful appearance, while at the same time being productive milk-bearing mothers. 'Great rear udders and attractive rumps' is reminiscent of the fetishization of women's 'tits and ass' in popular culture. The image of the cow's exposed vagina is meant to show that her vagina is open and ready for business, similar to the way in which pornographic images showing women's genitalia are suggestive of this same message.[12] And finally, GW Atwood making 'the kind you can have fun with' promises that these cows are more than productive machines, they are attractive, well-endowed, promiscuous, and fun-loving females ready for whatever might be in store for them. These images and discourses call up Adams' (1990) now-classic feminist analyses of the sexual politics of meat as they do the work of sexualizing the gendered commodification of the animal body.

Male bovine bodies, too, are fetishized as sexy, productive, icons of virility, and masculinity. After all, GW Atwood is the 'hottest bull to hit the type market in years' and Governor has 'greatness in his genes'. While some catalogs show only the cows to sell semen, others include regal portraits of bulls that draw attention to their height and stature and, in particular, to their highly visible (and large!) genitalia (e.g., TAG 2012). Similar to the way cows' udders and vaginas may be highlighted as selling points, the visibility of the bulls' large testicles and penises recalls the important reproductive function of these parts to commodity production and they are reminiscent of pornographic images of the human male erection. Calling up research on men's bodies and masculinity (Dutton 1995; Bordo 1999), the images of the bulls' muscular physique and large and visible genitalia produce the bull as a gendered symbol of the virile and reproductive body, and as a symbol of masculinity as it is tied up with sex and reproduction. The bull is not only reproductively viable but also an exceptional specimen of proven reproductive potential.

Finally, the male calf is the subject of a short-lived and intensified kind of gendered commodification. Because he is male and is of little use to the industry, his future is most likely tied to his productivity as veal. Discourses about veal within the dairy industry are not readily visible. At the World Dairy Expo, products relating to calves include housing, milk, and colostrum replacement products and automatic calf-feeding machines. However, these are all marketed in terms of raising calves for dairy production with no mention of raising calves for veal. Calf hutches, though frequently used for raising calves for veal according to the Calf-Tel® representative at the Expo (Calf-Tel® 2012), are marketed almost exclusively as 'housing the future' of dairy herds (Calf-Tel® 2013). Similarly, Comfy Calf Suites (2012) promises to be 'the trusted solution for raising calves indoors [. . .] to allow you to keep a close eye on the future of your dairy herd'. This focus on the future of dairy herds necessarily advertises methods of raising female calves for dairy, but the focus on the future of female calves helps to deflect attention away from the reality that

the majority of male calves have no future beyond slaughter at 4–6 months of age. This brief and intense commodification of the calf (specifically because he is male) resonates with the longer, more drawn-out experience of the reproductive cow and bull as (at times, visible/less visible) subjects in industry discourses of gendered commodification.

Industry discourses of sexualized violence

Explicitly sexualized discourse relating to the female cow's body can be found in the colloquial use of the term 'rape rack' in the industry to describe the device that holds the cow while she is artificially inseminated. The term 'rape rack', in relation to the artificial insemination of animals, originated with Harry Harlow in the mid-twentieth century during his laboratory experiments with mother and infant monkeys (Gruen 1993, 68–69). Harlow is well known for his outrageous and unconventional language as well as for his unethical experiments on animals in laboratory. 'Rape rack' has since been used widely in various arenas of forced animal reproduction, including the dairy industry. The colloquial use of 'rape rack' by industry workers is a site where the sexualized violence at work in forced artificial insemination and pregnancy can be better understood (Adams 1990; Gruen 1993).

Adams (1990, 53–54) explores the way in which using rape as a metaphor recalls women's experience of rape, but not women themselves. In the use of the term, 'rape rack', women are an absent referent, to borrow from Adams (1990), and the term relies on the shock value of recalling women's experience of rape without connecting completely with what rape means for individual women who have experienced it. The use of the term by industry workers works to conceal the violence against the animal precisely through the shock value and twisted humor associated with using the term to describe the device. Furthermore, it relies on an implicit understanding that to use 'rape' to describe a process happening to an animal is, of course, not serious. After all, she is 'only an animal'. But in fact, 'rape rack' is not at all a metaphor in this scenario where the cows are, literally, raped (i.e., they are forced to have intercourse and forcibly impregnated). Thus, rather than deflecting attention from the process with an unsavory joke, the misogyny of the system is, instead, revealed, and industry workers themselves unwittingly acknowledge that artificial insemination is a violation of the cow. The use of the term 'rape rack' to understand the context for artificial insemination calls up Haraway's (1989, 238) statement about misogyny in laboratory research – namely, that 'misogyny is built into the objects of everyday life [. . .] including the bodies of the animals, the jokes in the publications, and the shape of the equipment'. Nowhere is this misogyny more clearly seen in the dairy industry than in the discourse of rape and the actual process of artificial insemination.

Other discourses at work in the industry use sexual humor to conceal what seems to be a pervasive discomfort with the work of artificial insemination. One semen supplier, Universal Semen Sales (2012), sells merchandise that uses humor to demonstrate a colloquial sexualized discourse of semen production. Sammy Semen, the company's mascot, is a cartoon bull walking on his hind legs, bent over in a sneaky position, and carrying a case that says 'A.I.' (for artificial insemination). There are a number of different products available for sale that demonstrate this sexualized humor, but one T-shirt in particular serves as a good example. This T-shirt shows Sammy Semen in the foreground, sauntering up behind two smiling cows with large udders, bright red lipstick, and prominent backsides angled at Sammy (see Universal Semen Sales 1994). The cows look happy and excited that Sammy is about to pay them a visit. The company's slogan frames this cartoon scene: 'We stand behind every cow we service: Universal Semen Sales.'

The slogan serves a dual function. First, it reassures the buyer that the semen is of high quality – that they stand behind the quality of their product. But it is also meant to be humorous. Quite literally, the person performing the artificial insemination stands behind the cow to insert one hand into her rectum and the other into her vagina. 'Servicing' the cow calls up the colloquial use of the term 'service' in a sexual context. To 'service' someone sexually is to perform a sex act for their express pleasure. Thus, this slogan (paired with the cartoon of smiling cows) implies that the cows actually enjoy the process of artificial insemination and that artificial insemination is performed as an act of service for the cow.[13]

Furthermore, the use of Sammy Semen shifts the responsibility for the act away from the human farmers and onto the (cartoon) bull. Sammy Semen, then, serves several important functions. In addition to acting as the scapegoat for the performance of the artificial insemination (after all, it is *his* semen that is used), he is also used to naturalize the process of artificial insemination. In other words, by using him as a figure of insemination, we are encouraged to ignore the decidedly unnatural features of the industry's reproductive process (e.g., the human semen collection and artificial insemination and the fact that the bull is actually kept on an entirely separate farm from the cows). Instead, we are encouraged to imagine a natural process by which the animals are responsible for the reproductive process: the cows are happy and ready for sex, and the bull is perfectly happy to oblige and perform a necessary (and pleasurable) service. But even this suggestion is a bit tongue-in-cheek because clearly Sammy is carrying an A.I. case and walking on hind legs to sneak up on the eager, lipstick-wearing cows. Traces of the human involvement (the A.I. case and the bull walking on two legs) and the construction of a fictional narrative (Sammy doing the insemination and the sexy cows wearing lipstick) persist to recall the joke. The cartoon simultaneously reveals the human intervention while it jokingly deflects responsibility for the process of artificial insemination onto both the do-gooder Sammy and the oversexed cow.

Even as the industry is connected to global circuits of agricultural capital – through semen trade, milk sales, breeding, machine manufacturing, etc. – the discourses of sexualized violence and gendered commodification reveal the intimacy of industry impacts on the individual animal. In addition to the impacts of the actual practices involved in dairy production, these sexually violent and fetishized discourses work to further reproduce the system and deflect attention away from the human violence (on the part of the farmer and consumer) against the animal. Reading these discourses and their relation to industry practices ultimately helps us to see the violence of the global flow of capital for animals and others as well.

Conclusions

This article has linked geographies of the body and animal geographies in order to give context to the empirical lived realities of subjects of commodity production and the discourses that reproduce these realities and connect them to global political economy. Extending geographies of the body to include the animal and featuring the body more prevalently in animal geographies enriches work on both and reveals the unique conditions under which animal bodies are used in food production. The process of repeated reproduction and the intensification and appropriation of the reproductive process to which bovine animals in the dairy industry are subjected is violent and fundamentally propelled by the extraction of commodities. When they are deemed reproductively unviable, the animals are slaughtered for meat. *Sexualized violence* emerging from this *gendered commodification* of the male and female animal bodies in the dairy industry helps us to

understand the broader implications of commodifying bodies more generally and the inherent violence of a seemingly mundane and ordinary system with global ties. Mountz and Hyndman (2006) have argued that the 'global intimate' reveals important truths about the relationship between global political economy and the individual human body. My analysis pushes us to understand the 'global intimate' for nonhuman bodies as well, both for the sake of the animals involved (like the cow) and because the violence against the animal is laid bare in a way that allows us to understand the nature of violent commodification more generally.

The cow is born into a globalized industry whereby her reproductive potential and her outputs (milk and calves) are repeatedly commodified (through artificial insemination, milking, birthing female replacement calves for dairy and male calves for veal) until every part of her body is commodified one last time in death (i.e., slaughter). A few select bulls raised for semen are forcibly ejaculated to support an international market for semen and then slaughtered for meat when their productivity wanes. These bulls are discursively constructed as masculine, virile icons of sexual prowess, and are employed in industry narratives to take responsibility for the (human) violence against female animals. Meanwhile, discourses relating to the female bodies in the industry call up violent practices of rape, objectification through sex and reproduction, and gender norms relating to pregnancy and the female body.

Recalling the vignette of the cow with ear tag #1389 at the beginning of this article, her story is embodied in the lived experience of cows in the dairy industry, in the discourses that simultaneously reveal and conceal the violence of the industry, and in our own imaginaries as our thinking about the social relations at work in animal agriculture evolves. The cow with ear tag #1389 is the embodied reality of the quintessential US 'dairy cow', but her story is more than her own. Encompassed in her history is, to borrow Adams' (1990) term, an absent referent – the specter of the bull, the male calf, and the female calf that was born in order to replace her. These figures are simultaneously there and not there in the auction pen with the cow with ear tag #1389. Thus, an analysis that calls up these specters – these 'absent referents' – engages more fully with the network of gendered lives and bodies and the complex forms of commodification and life-long violence they experience.

These lives and bodies, and the stories that are told to justify their use in violent and appropriative ways, recall other forms of violence – gendered violence among humans, the inherent violence of capitalist modes of production and the exploitation of laborers for commodity production, and, more generally, violence enabled by 'othering' a group distant from our own. This violence against the cow, the bull, and the calf, then, is so pervasive and closely linked to other (perhaps more familiar) forms of violence that revealing the mundane and normalized ways these bodies are exploited, and the disingenuous move to assign blame to the bull for this violence, only further uncovers the systematic way in which humans are implicated in what is routinely done to the animal. In spite of the uneasy discomfort expressed through the humor employed in industry discourses and the move to blame the bull, the overwhelming takeaway here is the chilling ease with which animal bodies are violated, used up, and slaughtered in a system that obscures this violence through normalizing their use. This ease – this everyday mundanity – with which these bodies are exploited can be instructive for our own relationship to these and other animals subject to human use as we expand our circles of care to make room for other-than-human bodies in our research agendas and as we engage in the (re)formation of our personal politics of consumption. And finally, this attention to the animal that connects the intimate violence of commodifying other-than-human bodies to global, gendered structures of power gives us an enriched site for further feminist geographical research.

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Notes

1. This scene is drawn from participant observation by the author in a Washington State auction yard during a 'cull market' auction where 'spent dairy cows' are sold for 'meat'.
2. Offal is the waste product composed of the hide, viscera, and trimmings of the animal left over after the slaughter process. These parts, along with any animal that died before slaughter, are typically sent to a rendering plant and processed into useable materials – tallow for soap, bone and blood meal for animal feeds and fertilizers, pet foods, etc. The cow with ear tag #1389 would have been sent to rendering after she died in the auction yard.
3. One potentially productive lens through which to understand the material and discursive conditions under which animals are raised for food is Marx's commodity fetishism (in many ways, animals in the dairy industry are a classic example of the effects of commodity fetishism), but this is not the particular project of this paper (see Marx [1867] 1976; Cook et al. 2007; Hawkins 2011).
4. Ninety-five percent of egg-laying hens in the USA are housed in battery cages too small for them to spread their wings, (United Egg Producers 2010) and the majority of hens are 'de-beaked' to prevent cannibalism in such close quarters (Cheng 2011). Hens undergo induced molting to boost egg production through withholding of food and water (Dunkley et al. 2008) and are slaughtered at 2–3 years of age when they are deemed 'spent'. Highly intelligent and social animals, female pigs, are repeatedly impregnated and housed in gestation crates too small to turn around until their breeding potential starts to decline and they are sent to slaughter (Wise 2009).
5. 'Dairy cow' is placed in quotations to refer to the way cows used in dairy production are discursively constructed. Following Dunayer's (2001) work on the oppressive potential of language, the term 'dairy cow' works discursively to reinforce the notion that the animal's inherent purpose is to produce dairy. In the majority of this text, I will refer to *cows*, *cows used for their milk*, or some variation to resist merely reducing the individual animal to her reproductive potential and commodified body.
6. Mastitis is a common and persistent disease infecting the mammary glands of cows used in dairy production. Like in women who are nursing, the condition is extremely painful and may have negative impacts on milk production.
7. Name changed to protect the anonymity of the farmer.
8. Scale of the farm may impact certain aspects of the animal's life (e.g., method of impregnation, time spent indoors vs. outdoors, feed), but in an important way, this is largely irrelevant to the argument made here. The commodification and exploitation of the animal's body occurs on small and industrial-scale farms alike.
9. Though a fuller analysis of the 'teaser' steer is beyond the scope of this article, the fact that a male is used to arouse the bull for reproduction is a rich site for further analysis and engagement with queer geographies of the human/nonhuman. See Brown and Rasmussen (2010) for an interesting entry into thinking about the role of animals in queering queer geographies.
10. While beyond the scope of this article, discourses of 'happy cows' and improved welfare for animals in the food system work to further fetishize the animal as commodity. Rather than working against commodity fetishism, welfarist practices fetishize not only the animals' flesh and outputs but also the animal's 'improved welfare' (i.e., some consumers will pay more for so-called 'humane' products.)
11. Of course, this calls up the antiquated (still familiar) patriarchal expectations placed on women to become mothers and the assumption that if a woman does not birth and/or raise a child, then (in the words of Pfizer) 'what else will she do?' For an interesting exploration of the biological body and feminism, see Birke (1999).

12. Adams' *Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990) theorizes these connections in greater detail in addition to detailing many examples of the connections between women and animals and sexualized imagery/discourses.
13. This is eerily similar to familiar discourses about human victims of rape (e.g., 'she was asking for it').

Notes on contributor

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ABSTRACT TRANSLATIONS

La violencia sexualizada y la comodificación generizada del cuerpo animal en la producción de lácteos en la zona del noroeste del Pacífico de los EE.UU.

Este artículo se basa en un estudio de caso de vida bovina en los Estados Unidos en la industria láctea para observar las relaciones de poder y las redes violentas de comodificación involucradas. Utilizo los términos *comodificación generizada* y *violencia*

sexualizada para comprender las vidas de los animales en la industria y los discursos que son utilizados para reproducir estas prácticas. Centrándome en el sexo y el género, conceptos que por mucho tiempo han sido clásicos en geografía feminista, este artículo analiza la comodificación sexualmente violenta de los animales hembras y machos en la producción de lácteos. Además de las formas en las que ambos son explotados por sus capacidades productivas y reproductivas, los animales machos también son conceptualizados discursivamente como perpetradores de la violencia contra las hembras. Este artículo se interna en las geografías del cuerpo y las geografías animales para extender las geografías del cuerpo hacia cuerpos no-humanos y para presentar al cuerpo de forma más prevalente en las geografías animales. Esta atención al cuerpo animal revela en última instancia la ubiquidad de la violencia sexual y las consecuencias de la comodificación generizada de los otros, tanto los no-humanos como los humanos.

Palabras claves: íntimo global; lácteos; el cuerpo; geografías animales; agricultura; alimento

美国太平洋西北部酪农业生产中的性化声音与动物身体的性别化商品化

本文运用美国酪农业中牛隻生活的案例研究，观察其中所涉及的权力关係与商品化的暴力网络。我运用“性别化的商品化”与“性化的暴力”两个概念来理解动物在该产业中的生活，以及用以再生产此一实践的论述。本文聚焦性与性别这两个在女性主义地理学中长期做为经典的概念，探讨酪农生产过程中，同时对雌性及雄性动物在性方面的暴力商品化。除了雄性与雌性动物两者皆被剥削其生产和再生产的能力之外，雄性动物同时被论述性地概念化为对雌性动物施以暴力的加害者。本文涉入身体地理学与动物地理学，将身体地理学延伸至人类之外的身体，并更普遍地捕捉动物地理学中的身体。对于动物身体的关注，最终将揭露同时对非人类与人类他者的性暴力的普遍性，以及性别化的商品化后果。

关键词：全球亲密性; 酪农; 身体; 动物地理学; 农业; 食品