



SEARCH



Wednesday, Jan 15, 2014

NEWS

CHANGE

CULTURE & SOCIETY

TECH

BUSINESS

ABOUT

CONTACT

Wed January 15, 2014

Why are Women Treated as Meat in Those Animal Rights Ads?



By Amy-Willard Cross

If you want animals treated ethically, do you also grant the same treatment to humans?

Animal rights supporters can be very passionate about protecting the rights of other species. Many feel that all creatures are deserving of life, liberty and the right-not-to-be-dinner. Or that all species are equal and should have rights.

Whether you scramble eggs or eat other mammals' muscle fibres or not, you might have noticed that the animal rights movement does not always extend great kindness to women—at least representationally speaking. In the name of saving animals, women have been objectified— shown naked in a pool of blood, fellate vegetables on mock-porn sites, or hand out veggie dogs in bikinis.

If you don't want your chickens caged, how do you feel about doing it to women. Other human rights movements don't get into nasty racist or homophobic messaging, why should this one sink low for a higher purpose? But it does over and over again, as you can see in the slide show. A recent study published in PLOSone showed that these meaty-girl ads often hurt the [cause](#).

Sociologist Corey Wrenn who writes a blog called [The Academic Abolitionist Vegan](#) and runs the [Vegan Feminist Network](#) has some thought about the animal rights' movement and women that she shared with us.

[sign up for newsletter](#)

REAL-LIFE RESOLUTIONS TO KEEP



Rebecca Cohen, webcomic, cartoonist and the creator of the feminist superhero cartoon, Gyno-Star, presents New Year's resolutions--
[The Reality Version](#).

FROM VITAMIN W



TEXAS FAMILY FIGHTS BACK AS BRAIN-DEAD PREGNANT WOMAN REMAINS ON LIFE SUPPORT

Lynne Machado, the husband of Marlise Munoz, is suing the Texas hospital that is keeping his wife's brain-dead body alive just because she is pregnant. Blogger Rachel Walden from Our Bodies, Ourselves weighs in.

Why do some animal rights groups objectify women to sell their message?

Most groups are under two assumptions: 1. We don't know what works, so let's try everything 2. Sex sells everything else, shouldn't it sell animal rights, too? What's underlying both points here is a fundamental disregard for women's status as a vulnerable group. We would never argue that a little speciesism is okay, and go slaughter a pig out in a public square to raise awareness. We would never argue that a little racism is okay, so let's use racist symbols in our campaigning (though PETA has been known to do this!). But women are so thoroughly denigrated in our society, we don't think twice about having women sexualized.

The Nonhuman Animal rights movement is largely led by men. With 80% women, we certainly have lots of important female contributors, but the fact is that the people getting the respect and prestige in this movement are men. And given that most of the movement is female, the number of men occupying powerful roles is really disproportionate. When we have men running the movement and suggesting that a little sexism is okay, we see a fundamental disconnect from their male privilege and the lived reality of women in a world where 1 in 3 women and girls will be raped or beaten at least once in her lifetime.

If women make up the majority of Nonhuman Animal rights supporters, why do they allow this?

Sociological research in the Nonhuman Animal rights movement has shown that men are routinely pushed into positions of power where they are celebrated because the movement knows that we are mostly female, and we know that women's opinions are denigrated. We know that nobody wants to hear what women have to say, so we let men do the talking for us. In many ways, it's a political move.

Of course there's also the influence of third-wave feminism and "post-feminism" which is really just patriarchy in disguise. Patriarchy has co-opted the feminist movement and has convinced a generation of women that taking your clothes off, objectifying yourself, performing sex acts, and serving men is actually "liberating" or "empowering." It's the same old forms of exploitation neatly repackaged in shiny "feminist" wrapping paper.

How does objectifying women hurt the cause of animal welfare?

Well, for one, nobody takes us seriously. It becomes one more reason for people to ignore our message. If anyone thinks that a woman performing a strip tease is going to get people to think seriously about anti-speciesism and anti-oppression, frankly, they're kidding themselves. It gets attention, but it doesn't get the attention we want. Our message gets lost. Misogynistic tactics attract misogynists (and feminist critics), and that's all there is to it. If we used pedophilia to bring attention to speciesism, what do you think would happen? We'd be normalizing pedophilia, we'd be promoting it--we'd be attracting pedophiles to view our material. We certainly wouldn't be doing much to liberate Nonhumans.

More importantly, however, we need to look at the larger implications of tactics like these. Research shows that the sexual objectification of women, pornography, images of violence against women, focus on body image, etc. all decrease the social status of women. It feeds rape culture and it feeds the epidemic levels of violence against women. It aggravates discrimination. How can we tear down oppression for Nonhuman Animals when we're building it up for women? Oppression works intersectionally. Many people have argued that if we focus on too many types of discrimination, we crowd out the fight to liberate animals, it gets too "confusing." This ignores the reality of how oppression works—how patriarchy (and its best friend capitalism) subjugates all vulnerable groups in very similar ways. We're not challenging that paradigm when we give the "okay" to hurt women but put our foot down when it comes to Nonhuman Animals.

Research has shown that the way women are represented in the media has a very damaging impact on women's self esteem and self efficacy. Women spend way more time worrying about how they are perceived, if they are sexually attractive, if they're looking their best, etc. Instead of using that brain space for political activism, it becomes wrapped up in how to perform our role as a subservient object within the patriarchy. Research shows that women actually start to self-objectify. Women who self-objectify and experience diminished feelings of self-efficacy are less likely to want to fight their oppression. If the science is telling us that sexist media makes women weak social actors against their *own* oppression, how can we



THERE ONCE WAS A LONELY OLD LADY... HOW THE PRINCESS LIFESTYLE CAN BACKFIRE

The toxic brainwashing must end. We need program our girls to learn how to have a full life with or without a life partner. Entrepreneur and writer Penny Herscher explains the unexpected life lesson passed on from her mother-in-law.



WANT TO BE IN CHARGE? CHECK OUT A REAL LEADER'S TO-DO LIST

American women have been stuck holding 15 to 20 percent of the top jobs across all sectors for more than a decade now: CEOs, law partners, members of Congress, on boards of directors. Tired of hearing that statistic? Mary Hughes tells us what we can do to advance women's leadership.



WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN 2014: MOVING FORWARD AND GETTING READY FOR CHANGE

Women's organizations are at the forefront

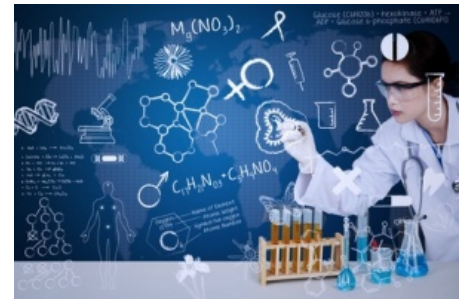
expect the Nonhuman Animal rights movement—which is mostly women—to make a serious attempt to dismantle speciesism? We're fighting with our hands tied behind our back.

And whether you're livestock or a real live woman, that is really hard.

In this bit of auto-eroticism vegetables are deemed as sexy--really really sexy.

In a recent video, that hasn't had much attention, PETA plays with men's fear of petering out while making love

of finding ways to fix some of America's flaws. We asked some of the larger groups what they accomplished in the last year and what they hope to get done in the coming 12 months. From pushing through legislation, to changing corporate practices to increasing access to health care, women are putting in the groundwork to create change.



AN ECONOMIST'S FORMULA FOR SHRINKING THE GENDER PAY GAP

Harvard economist Claudia Goldin explores how to fix the wage gap, and she breaks down how things work in law, finance and pharmacy. Guess which one is among the most egalitarian professions where women thrive. The solution isn't government programs or leaning in.



WHITE WOMEN, PLEASE LEARN FROM ANI'S MISTAKE: JUST LISTEN

Yes, she apologized, but it's still shocking that activist and musician Ani DiFranco didn't realize holding a women's retreat on a former Louisiana slave plantation was not OK. One would think some white feminists would be taking a step back and learning from what our sisters of color are saying about and to us.

Image: French sign, [David C Wong](#) via flickr



Pamela Lee Anderson is not a piece of meat. Or what?

[PETA](#) [Animal Rights Groups](#) [Nonhuman Animal Rights](#) [Ads](#) [PSAs](#) [Sexist](#) [Misogynist](#) [Campaigns](#)

Add new comment

Your name

E-mail

The content of this field is kept private and will not be shown publicly.

Homepage

Subject

Comment *

Plain text

No HTML tags allowed.

Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.

Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

[More information about text formats](#)

By submitting this form, you accept the [Mollom privacy policy](#).

Save

Preview

© VITAMIN W MEDIA LLC

ABOUT US	CONTACT US	PARTNERSHIPS	PRIVACY POLICY	SUBMISSION POLICY	COPYRIGHT	TERMS OF SERVICE	CIRCLE OF ADVISORS
----------	------------	--------------	----------------	-------------------	-----------	------------------	--------------------

VITAMIN W NONPROFIT PARTNERS

VITAMIN W's mandate is to raise awareness and funds for our [Nonprofit Partners](#) that focus on women's issues.