Domestic Violence & Abuse, Companion Animals & Independent Agency: Why As Criminologists We Need To Converse Beyond Speciesism, Towards An Intersectional Approach
Companion Animals?

- 13 million UK households (PFMA, 2018)
  - 45% of which have a pet
  - 26% dogs
  - 18% cats
  - Rest = horses, small animals, reptiles & birds

Thus, pets/companion animals play an important role in the social construction of a family home within modern ‘western’ society
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2005 - 2016</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Sentence</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>4,709</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>3,303</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional Discharge</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>2,365</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended Sentence</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>1,578</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodial Sentence</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>1,063</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otherwise Dealt With</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute Discharge</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>854</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>13,858</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sentencing Continuum: From Serious Enough To So Serious? OR, Not At All Serious?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defendants convicted (juvenile offenders)</td>
<td>747(15)</td>
<td>696(18)</td>
<td>744(35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosecution success rate ¹</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defendants with all offences dismissed after trial</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison sentences imposed on individuals ²</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended prison sentences imposed on individuals ³</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disqualification orders imposed on individuals under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 ¹</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convictions secured in the magistrates’ court (juvenile offenders)</td>
<td>1,678(20)</td>
<td>1,492(25)</td>
<td>1,477(17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Total defendants convicted as a percentage of all defendants.
² One offender may have more than one sentence imposed.
³ A disqualification order can be imposed as a penalty in its own right, or it can be additional to any other penalty imposed.
A Typology of Domestic Violence (Abuse)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intimate Terrorism</td>
<td>Feminists insist that domestic violence is perpetuated by men against women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Resistance</td>
<td>Family violence theorists insist that women are as violent as men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational Couple Violence</td>
<td>Neither group has considered the possibility that they are simply studying two different phenomena.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Violent Resistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ontological Realities In DVA Studies

- Anthropocentric
- Dealing with challenge of male ‘hierarchy’
- Changing trajectory of Feminist thought & what Feminists have & continue to ‘tackle’*
- Social Constructionist & Neo-essentialist notion of the self as a concept
- Developments in DVA studies – emergence of intersectionality appreciation in exploring ‘lived experiences’

- **History (journey so far…)** The importance of naming & language in framing understanding/conveying meaning
  - Animals; Other animals; Non-human animals; Pets; Companion Animals; Persons
  - Battered wife, Domestic Violence, Family Violence, IPV, Domestic Abuse, Gender Violence, Coercive Control
Animal Abuse in DVA Studies

- Favor et al. (2006) Batterers threaten or harm pets in order to intimidate & control their (female) partners - Victim trauma, animal death & continuous harm to both human & animal

- Fitzgerald (2007) Concern for the well-being of animals resulted in delaying leaving abusive relationships - see also Newberry (2017)

- Sollund (2011) Expressions of speciesism: the effect of keeping companion animals on animal abuse, animal trafficking & species decline

- McDonald et al. (2015) Explored impacts of experiencing companion animal abuse (against mother)

- Monsalve et al. (2017) Female victims delay leaving

- Wuerch et al. (2017) Service providers say concern for animal delays victims leaving

- Riggs, Taylor, Fraser, Donovan & Signal (2018) Explored the link between DVA & animal cruelty in intimate relationships of people of diverse genders &/or sexualities

Thus, we are moving from animals as property, weapons & signifiers of violence between humans. Move towards physical, psychological, & emotional abuse of animals as objects of study in their own right.
Starting Orders: State Of Play

- Acknowledging paradigm shift: from Private Trouble to Public Issue
- Hester (2011) 3 Planet Model & Concept of Black Hole
- MARAC IDVA Specialist DV Courts
- DASH: Risk factors (indicators) & Red flags
- Everyone’s business (HMIP) Still Everyone’s business
- Court process (Civil & Criminal) animals as human property
- Many leaving abusive relationships have limited options re pet safety/well-being – pockets of cooperation needed!
- More recently registers for AA but is this enough?
- Until every woman, child, and companion animal is safe

**NB: THE SHIFT IS ON!**

Criminal (In)Justice system
STOP Victim Blaming!

**Domestic violence:** considered a crime (civil & criminal law) range of support “violent male partner”

**Child protection:** (public law) welfare approach: state intervention in abusive families; “Mother seen as failing to protect”

**Child contact:** (private law); negotiated or mediated outcome; “good enough Father”
The Shift Is On

- Information sharing protocols (cross reporting) - pilot in Scotland
- Joint training, seminars, conferences, symposiums, networking - e.g. RSPCA & NSPCC
- More pet fostering models & provision
- Links (MAW) Group Network - build on 2x annual meetings
- Knowledge exchange: Vet's practices etc
- More commensurate maximum sentences for AA (but still only 5 years)
- Some Rehabilitation & Desistance interventions for AA's per se (eligibility criteria = pet owner') via Community Rehabilitation Company's Pilot
- CPS including 'Pets' in Coercive Control charging decisions
- Routine Enquiry on the agenda (training deficit) in Assessments
- Inclusion of Companion Animals in Protective Orders
Into The Further...

- Non-human animals as PERSONS (Francione) Sentience = Life = Right not to be property & therefore persons
- Remove Barriers to integration & species into intersectionality rather than a dated perspective, an ecofeminist intersection is integral if we are to introduce/develop appropriate prevention, intervention & protection strategies for companion animals
- Reframing the anthropocentric hierarchy embedded in western society is an important step in order to develop intervention/practice strategies
- Treat the concept as (in)justice/species (in)justice movement
- Synthesise & drive forward similar concepts of animal cruelty (including within legislation) across countries where accepting & adopting a non-anthropocentric perspective in policy will help...
- ALSO, Research & Research Informed Teaching – PHD, Curriculum Development, Healthy/Civic Values Education in HEIs
- Healthy Relationships Education In Schools should not be just about human animals!
- Call for census data to be collected for non-humans
- Compensation to fund provision (as SARCS are) from increase in victim surcharge
- Innovative Methods of Data collection
Valuing the natural environment & other species based on its contribution to the quality of human life (as in humanism).

Research focuses on animals as they relate to human behavior & worth (value) placed upon them by humans rather than as individuals in themselves.

The anthropocentric driver in human's use (note re treatment of) of companion animals is expanded upon by Sollund (2011 2013). She contends that humans have a habit of treating companion animals like children—thus humanising them.

Owners of companion animals become 'responsible grown ups' where companion animals are dependent & thus rights are withheld.
Ecocentric Model

- Finds inherent (intrinsic) value in all of nature
- Thus takes a (much) wider view of the world than anthropocentrism, which sees individual humans & the human species as more valuable than all other organisms
- Questions human privilege over non-humans
- Eco-centric model proposes a reconstruction of the consciousness of the value of nature
- The value of non-human entities is not dependent on the value placed upon them by humans
- Can be interpreted as a metaphysical change in the understanding of human – nature relationship
Intersectionality

(Feminist) Intersectionality

- Challenges primacy of gender as an explanatory model of DVA
- Engages in research examining other forms of oppression & privilege e.g. race, ethnicity, class, ableism, sexuality etc
- Thus, researchers may follow a guiding principle to investigate other structural elements related to inequality & how they're used to explore/examine DVA utilising an analysis of privilege & power (control)
- Noting social-structural/cultural conditions which includes the definition of DVA & also the experience of animals within those conditions

- Inserting Non-human Animals into the Intersectionality debate
- Question anthropocentric privilege & anthropocentric power structures within western society
- Not focusing on this means we do not understand the true experiences of these victims & trivialise their experiences
Eco-Feminism

➢ Important connections exist between the treatment of women, people of colour, & the underclass on one hand & the treatment of nonhuman nature on the other.

- Ecological feminism & environmentalism or environmental ethics must address these connections seriously.

➢ Idea that companion animal ownership is male bias & representation of masculinity, representation of patriarchal hierarchies.

- This synthesis is clear when looking at cases of companion animal abuse & the interrelationships between female & male partners - we are heirs to traditional hierarchies of power, with the archetype of male over female.

➢ Our world is in chaos, it is time for us to address the issues & these reflect a larger societal structure.

- Challenging androcentrism/anthropocentrism, is to look at other forms of domination, particularly over non-human life.

➢ Call for ‘inclusive victimology’: victims of eco-injustice & species injustice (i.e. treated & harmed based on anthropocentric values of humans (Sollund, 2011).
Recognising Invisible victims: Emerging into plain sight?

- Concept of self as a continuous idea
- i.e. self not necessarily an end point but interpreted as a reflection on social processes/ cultural practices that interpret agency within a broader series of ongoing activities
- For us, this means questioning both how non-human species can be considered & recognised as having agency how they can (should) be considered within the CJS & in particular the concept of animals, not simply humans as victims of DVA but also the victims of inter-human relationships
We Don’t Have All The Answers

But We Believe It Is Important To Start The Conversation

► We want to listen to your opinions/perceptions on possible pathways forward
► We have created an event for you to send your thoughts, suggestions, perceptions If you can make time to do this – if so please log onto the event using the following system:

► www.sli.do
► Event Name: Domestic Violence and Pets
► Code: #J771

► Or if you prefer, you can provide some written feedback on the sheets provided
Access the portal and complete Q/A link with quote below

“Sympathy beyond the confines of man, that is, humanity to the lower animals, seems to be one of the latest moral acquisitions. It is apparently unfelt by savages, except towards their pets ...’ – Charles Darwin