



"Meat-me": From flesh machines to individualities. A case for an anti-speciesist degrowth

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Abstract

Degrowth, a leading paradigm addressing our socio-ecological crisis, criticizes the highly destructive animal factory-farming industry. However, it does not challenge the commodification of sentient beings and the underlying system that perpetuates the oppression of the "less-than-human." Animals-as-food, reduced to "flesh machines," are exploited with institutional legitimacy rooted in societal belief systems. Drawing upon posthumanist and ecofeminist perspectives, this article argues that to achieve a just transformation, the degrowth proposal must gain ethical congruence and dismantle anthropocentric worldviews. Adopting an anti-speciesist framework becomes crucial to overcoming socio-ecological collapse, fundamentally reshaping our interactions with cohabiting individualities within the biosphere.

Keywords

speciesism,
degrowth,
anthropocentrism,
animal ethics,
commodification of
life

1. Introduction

Redesigning our global food systems has become an imperative as we face socio-ecological collapse. Feeding a growing population while radically transforming how food is produced, in a way that respects the very foundations of life, is tremendously challenging. Amongst the most destructive industries, we find animal factory "farming"², in terms of its negative effects on ecosystems, its degradation of life, and in its role in perpetuating an unjust system of violence, oppression, and inequality.

Degrowth, a "movement of activists" from the Global North that flourished in the early 2000s (D'Alisa *et al.*, 2014: 31), connects diverse ideas, concepts and proposals (Demaria *et al.*, 2013) that share common points: a criticism of growth, capitalism, and commodification (D'Alisa *et al.*, 2014). It is also a "desired direction" (D'Alisa *et al.*, 2014, p.33) towards new societies that move away from oppression and are based on justice, equality and well-being. As such, it promotes a shift from the economy of profit to the economy of care. It denounces capitalism and its growth imperative, the inequalities it perpetuates, and the damages caused to ecosystems and their peoples due to its focus on profit and accumulation of capital. It is therefore openly critical of the factory-farm system for its ecological damage, and advocates a reduction in the production and consumption of animal protein (Bodirsky *et al.*, 2022; Hoehn *et al.*, 2021; Lenzen *et al.*, 2022). Degrowth scholars have also commented on the inefficiencies of producing beef and on the need to downscale this type of industry (Bodirsky *et al.*, 2022; Hickel, 2020). The work of Bodirsky *et al.* (2022) provides perhaps the most recent link between a "transformative dietary change" and achieving the necessary degrowth goals. They tested different scenarios to assess their potential to degrow the food system and its associated negative impacts on ecosystems. They found that a radical change in diet— with a drastically reduced consumption of animal foods

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² I use quotation marks to draw attention to the fact that animal factories differ greatly from farms.

– is the most effective single strategy for achieving good health, mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, and benefitting biodiversity all at once.

However, despite these findings—and despite degrowth being a subversive counter-movement because of its many ideas and practices – when it comes to "food animals", as other authors have pointed out (Díaz & Merino, 2018; Ferrari, 2012), it conforms to a superficial approach that avoids engaging with the ethical and political problem of animal exploitation. The animals-as-food issue is dismissed via a diagnosis of an "excess use" and with the proposed remedy of downscaling consumption, as animal agriculture is placed in the category of the "less necessary" (Lenzen *et al.*, 2022).

This "small-scale" approach taken by the degrowth movement does not shake the foundations of a system that, as will be explored in this article, reinforces power relations, secures the structure of bio-capitalism and legitimizes the domination of individual species for the sake of human profit, at the expense of other marginalized human communities. By settling for the uncontroversial "reduction of", the degrowth discourse has dismissed profound conversations about the relationship between humans and non-human animals.

The mainstream degrowth movement fails to decenter the human, just vaguely mentioning the concept of "multispecies sustainability" (McGreevy *et al.*, 2022) or calling for "different relations with the non-human world" (D'Alisa *et al.*, 2014: 33), without entering into specificities on how to achieve "different relations" if the power dynamics between the possessor and the possessed, the oppressor and the oppressed are kept intact. In this article, I argue that the transformative potential of the degrowth movement cannot be fully realized without a clear anti-speciesist position that actively rejects the discrimination and oppression of non-human species. This framework radically questions the way humans interact with the ecosystem, providing new ways to conceive humans' place in the biosphere and advocating for egalitarian and just socio-cultures where care and conviviality – practices much acclaimed and reclaimed by the degrowth literature – are expanded to non-human others.

The article adopts an interdisciplinary approach, structured into three sections. The first explores the ethical and political implications of considering animals as mere "flesh." The second section critically examines the construction of the "less-than-human" in dichotomous narratives, drawing on insights from ecofeminist and posthumanist authors. The third section outlines an anti-speciesist framework that is essential for rethinking humanity's place in the biosphere – as one species coexisting among millions of others.

2. Animals as flesh

Human exploitation of sentient beings has generated heated debates for decades. This moral dilemma includes the renunciation of eating animal products in ancient religions³, but the concern has become more prominent since farms were replaced by industries⁴, and animals became "flesh machines." The institutionalized commodification of life, which turns animals into biocapital, reflects capitalists' modus operandi: the appropriation and domination of nature in all its forms for the sake of profit. The animal industry is no exception; it is a highly profitable enterprise where efficiency and productivity are the main priorities, while the well-being of animals is necessarily a subordinated matter. Human workers operate the tools that disassemble life, literally piece by piece⁵, at the expense of their own health and sanity (Joy, 2010), while non-human animals suffer uncountable atrocities until their premature deaths.

Extensive forms of animal farming, such as pastoralism and High Nature Value Farming systems, are supported by a significant number of degrowth proponents. Unlike intensive methods, these practices offer many benefits for animal welfare, help preserve certain ecosystems, and support the livelihoods of individuals around the world (Nori *et al.*, 2005). Some landscapes have evolved through the interaction between humans

³ E.g. Jainism, some currents in Buddhism and Hinduism; in philosophical traditions such as the Pythagoreans.

⁴ Although this article primarily focuses on land-based farms, aquaculture systems essentially operate as underwater factory-farms as well (Changing Markets Foundation, 2019).

⁵ This is a reference to an article from 2001 published in the *Washington Post* called "They die piece by piece" by Jo Warrick.

and animal herds, maintaining unique biodiversity and cultural significance (Bignal & McCracken, 2000; Resare Sahlin *et al.*, 2024; Torres-Miralles *et al.*, 2022). A study in *Nature* assessed the "biodiversity limits" of grassland ruminant production and found that low-intensity grazing can maintain and support biodiversity, while high-intensity grazing appears harmful to it. The authors identified global grazing lands and estimated the potential production of meat and milk while safeguarding biodiversity, which was 0.8 kg of meat and 2.2 kg of milk per person annually, with variation between countries. For 133 countries, production within biodiversity limits corresponded to less than 10% of current consumption levels (Resare Sahlin *et al.*, 2024). Presently, consumption patterns exacerbate inequality, because large economies are the major consumers⁶ while exploiting the grazing lands in other regions (Pendrill *et al.*, 2019; Resare Sahlin *et al.*, 2024). These nations should drastically reduce their consumption of animal foods to protect surrounding ecosystems and ensure equal distribution, while safeguarding the livelihoods of vulnerable groups.

Although extensive practices are more likely to provide for the behavioral needs of animals (Hemsworth *et al.*, 1995; Temple & Manteca, 2020), significant welfare issues remain unresolved. Painful husbandry practices such as castration, dehorning, tail-docking, nose ringing and mulesing are widely performed, often without adequate pain-mitigation strategies (Temple & Manteca, 2020). Climate conditions, food and water availability and quality, thermal stress, and diseases are other factors that pose significant threats to animal welfare in extensive systems and have been the focus of recent research (Temple & Manteca, 2020). Discomfort and pain during transportation and at slaughter also warrant serious consideration.

Some strategies to address animal welfare issues involve genetic improvements and research (Temple & Manteca, 2020), raising ethical questions and inviting reflections on Foucauldian biopolitics, which we will explore further later. Ultimately, the dilemma persists of how to balance reducing the consumption of animal products while implementing policies that protect the most vulnerable populations, dependent on traditional forms of pastoralism for ruminants. In addition, the acceptability of using sentient animals as food in regions where alternatives are available remains a critical issue. In industrialized societies, where human-animal and human-nature relationships are distant, and consumption unreflective and voracious, the need to learn alternative ways of relating to non-human animals is paramount, yet seemingly insurmountable. However, establishing this as a priority is crucial for rethinking our ethical responsibilities and fostering a respectful coexistence with the non-human world.

The commodification of life

As Nancy Fraser (2020) observes, neoliberalism has commodified all spheres of life, threatening the very possibilities of life itself and propelling humanity toward a potentially terminal crisis. The structures of animal oppression mirror the functioning of the capitalist system as a whole, embodying its logic of domination, control, and exploitation that reduces sentient beings to mere commodities – biocapital. Non-human animals are dispossessed of the qualities that define them as conscious individuals, to be simply liquidated once their commercial value has been exhausted (Nibert, 2017). In slaughterhouses, animals are perceived as mere objects on an un-assembly line, reduced to their different parts and components. As with any capitalist enterprise, the goal is maximizing productivity while minimizing costs, rendering concerns about well-being secondary to efficiency – for both the animals and the human workers involved. A report from Oxfam highlights this parallel exploitation: "workers are reduced to pieces of the machine, little more than the body parts that hang, cut, trim, and load – rapidly and relentlessly" (Oxfam, 2016).

Life and death – both human and non-human – are meticulously regulated through mechanisms of biopower. Foucault (1978) describes this form of power as one that disciplines the body-as-a-machine, optimizing its utility and docility while integrating it into systems of economic and efficient control. Wolfe (2013) emphasizes that the modern factory farm epitomizes biopolitical control more than any other context in history, with practices such as eugenics, artificial insemination, selective breeding, and pharmaceutical enhancements being central to this regime. The regulatory control over life – the "administering life" – is

⁶ According to OECD/FAO, in 2022, high-income countries consumed 33% of all meat, although they represent 16% of the population (OECD, 2023).

inseparable from the "administering of death" in animal businesses: the right to seize bodies, and ultimately life itself, culminating in the "privilege to seize hold of life in order to suppress it" (Foucault, 1978, p.136). These mechanisms are central to the factory-farm but extend to other farming methods where animals are still treated as mere commodities, referred to as "heads", "units", and "livestock", with productivity as the primary goal and death as the inevitable outcome.

Genetic modifications seek to obtain increasingly docile and "productive" animals, while technological innovations and optimized production methods seek to minimize emissions and waste, enhancing efficiency – all at the expense of both human and animal well-being. Animals are dispossessed of their bodies and denied the right to live autonomously, all to satisfy human interests. In this configuration, entire populations of animals are "mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital" (Foucault, 1978, p.137).

Within this biopolitical framework, the mass exploitation of animals is legitimized by institutions and routinized within the factory, making the acts of killing difficult to question ethically. The oxymoron "humane killing", used by the industry, also seeks to legitimize these practices. Non-human animals are thus considered legitimately exploitable, serving human purposes. As Wolfe (2013) argues, those who fall outside the frame – whether due to differences in race, species, gender, religion, or nationality – are always threatened with "a non-criminal putting to death."

Including animals as biopolitical subjects opens the possibility for resisting "the articulations of a biopolitical dispositif in and through the body" (Wolfe, 2013, p.35). Consequently, if the degrowth movement seeks to genuinely challenge the practices of domination at the core of current socio-environmental injustices, it must re-politicize the question of animals-as-food. This entails unsettling not only the material but also the symbolic role that animals play in perpetuating power relations. Moreover, the degrowth movement's critique of market capitalism, particularly its devaluation and commodification of life, finds further expression in a commitment to rejecting participation in the business of animal slaughter.

Social consent and the animal industry's influence

The interplay between social consent and the institutionalized oppression of non-human animals must be examined to understand the underlying system of domination that governs animal exploitation. As Núria Almiron notes, building on Nibert (2013), "social consent on how humans treat other animals can be deemed a consequence of the dominant ideology in society. Economic and corporate elites are very influential in shaping mainstream ideologies and have traditionally played a major role in determining the institutionalization of nonhuman animal exploitation" (Almiron, 2016, p.27).

The animal industry, among the most lucrative globally, forms a cornerstone of major economies (Almiron, 2016). Dominated by a few vertically and horizontally integrated companies, the global meat market wields substantial political power. This privileged position allows these corporations to "influence the manufacturing of consent" (Almiron, 2016, p.27) regarding the institutionalized abuse of non-human animals.

For instance, meat industries have repeatedly obstructed climate policies that could potentially reduce their production and revenue (Lazarus *et al.*, 2021). Powerful lobby groups, often supported by governments, have pressured the Food and Agriculture Organization to reassess its climate emissions analysis (GRAIN & IATP, 2018). In 2021, Unerthed reported leaked documents revealing that certain governments consistently pushed "the IPCC to remove or water-down messages in its report about the need to curb meat and dairy consumption to tackle global warming" as well as the climate benefits of plant-based diets (Unerthed, 2021). Additionally, meat industries have been shown to heavily influence the national dietary guidelines of their respective countries (Sievert *et al.*, 2021). Through massively funded marketing efforts and other manipulative tactics, awareness of the problems associated with animal product consumption tends to be low, despite mounting evidence of its harmful effects. Powerful institutions act as "ideational filters by legitimizing certain forms of knowledge and evidence over others" (Sievert *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, substantial subsidies to the meat industry drive increased production and rising global meat consumption while consolidating market

power. Large corporations outcompete small farmers, impacting rural livelihoods, limiting consumer options, and entrenching unsustainable production practices, thereby exacerbating social and environmental injustices.

However, as Almiron (2016) points out, responsibility extends beyond large corporations to include individual choices, particularly when considering "the importance of the social environment influencing these choices" (Almiron, 2016, p.27). This is evident in the animal industry's vigorous reactions to any perceived threat that could alter perceptions or disrupt social consent.⁷

The lack of awareness regarding the connections between diet and the climate crisis, combined with the powerful influence of the animal industry lobby, significantly impedes meaningful change. The meat industry plays a key role in perpetuating the status quo, reinforcing the perception of animals as exploitable objects and hindering a shift in this perspective. Educating policymakers, educators, government officials, and the general public is essential for facilitating behavioral change. Dietary preferences are neither innate nor immutable; they evolve over time and are heavily influenced by government food and agriculture policies (Donahue, 2015).

A comprehensive understanding of the global "interlocking system of domination" and "the interests involved in reproducing hegemonic power and prevalent mainstream ideologies" (Almiron *et al.*, 2018, p.8) is essential for catalyzing social transformation. Degrowth theorists and activists, who challenge structural power imbalances and inequalities, must integrate these issues into their broader analysis to maintain coherence in their critique.

3. Unpacking the construction of the "less-than-human"

The large-scale exploitation of animals parallels the ruthless extraction of "natural resources"⁸ driven by the growth imperative of capitalist societies. The belief that humans can exploit resources without limit became deeply ingrained in Western thought, positioning the Earth as a mere toolbox at humanity's disposal (Tafalla, 2022). This perception of humans as masters of the natural world, separated from and above it, is rooted in Cartesian narratives that create a sharp dichotomy between the human – or cultural – and the natural, between subject and object.

The field of ecofeminism critically examines how dualisms perpetuate moral hierarchies and oppression, subordinating one term in each pair to the other. It links the exploitation of women, animals, and the environment, advocating for an integrated approach to social justice that challenges patriarchal and capitalist systems. By addressing intersections of gender, species and ecology, ecofeminists promote an ethics of care and respect for all living beings and ecosystems, aligning with the anti-speciesist position supported here. This theoretical perspective significantly enriches and complements degrowth thinking and, given the depth and relevance of its analyses, this section will draw extensively on it.

As Plumwood (1993) argues, "to be defined as 'nature' [...] is to be defined as passive, as non-agent and non-subject, as the 'environment' or invisible background conditions against which the 'foreground' achievements of reason or culture [...] take place" (p. 4). Viewing nature as the "subordinate other", and regarding animals and other organisms as objects dispossessed of agency, facilitates their pollution, degradation, and exploitation without moral consideration. Capitalist accumulation and expansion have significantly benefited from this worldview⁹, with their origins deeply rooted in the exploitation, trade, and ownership of other animals (Almiron & Tafalla, 2019).

The categorization of what constitutes the human is constructed in opposition to the "animal", the "less-than-human", thus determining who is included in the privileged group – and granted moral standing and rights – and who is not (Esposito, 2011; Wolfe, 2013). Within the humanist tradition, the exalted rational subject is

⁷ For instance, the EU spent US\$66 million dollar eqvts. (€60 million) between 2017 and 2019 on marketing campaigns addressed at reversing the decline in meat consumption and at trying to clean the image of the industry related to the mistreatment of animals bred for food (European Commission).

⁸ The widespread use of this expression reveals how "nature" is perceived as something inert, existing only for human benefit, and measured in terms of its instrumental value, as a set of materials to be extracted and used for profit.

⁹ In *Less is More*, Jason Hickel (2020) provides a complete account on the formation of dualist thought and how it was key to capitalists' appropriation of nature.

endowed with agency, moral autonomy, and freedom through the exercise of rationality. However, this creates a moral hierarchy and the subsequent exclusion of certain beings from the realm of the "human", a historical exclusion that has been problematic, as evidenced by the treatment of slaves, Indigenous peoples, and the dispossessed. Lowe (2015) notes: "As modern liberalism defined the human and universalized its attributes to European man, it simultaneously differentiated peoples in the colonies as less than human" (p. 91). The less-than-human is constructed as "primitive", akin to the animal, and is perceived as not having "free[d] himself from a purely instinctive relationship with his environment" (Mbembe, 2019, p.94). Thus, the liberal subject is seen as having risen above their animality – the natural or biological necessities that degrade them – achieving a superior, moral existence in stark contrast with those who fall "outside the frame" (Wolfe, 2013), living the "bare life" (Agamben, 1998). Goodfellow (2021) observes: "The binary animal (which in this context includes animalized humans) is othered, dirty, aggressive, hypersexual, unintelligent and lacking in morals, feeling and worth [...] It's a way of gatekeeping humanity for white, cishet, able-bodied, neurotypical, class privileged men." (p. 11).

The construction of "internal nature" or "animality" frames certain human characteristics as undesirable and requiring "elimination or careful regulation", a process historically employed to marginalize specific social groups (Giraud, 2013). Wolfe (2013) concurs, arguing that the "distinction 'human/animal' – as the history of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism well shows – is a discursive resource, not a zoological designation; [...] a kind of dispositif or apparatus" (p. 10).

Historically, women have been subordinated in the man-woman duality and compared to devalued "nature" in a culture/nature dualism. Carol Adams (2016) describes the interconnection between the oppression of animals and women, highlighting their similar objectification in a patriarchal context. Women have been ontologized as "emotion" in the reason-emotion pair, with the former considered an elevated matter of the spirit and the latter grounded in the body, and thus deemed less valid to inform morality. This marginalization extends to empathy and compassion, often dismissed as unscientific and sentimental, especially in discussions on animal suffering (Giraud, 2013). Such androcentric and anthropocentric views – marked by separation from the natural world, affective distancing, and rational "resource management" – must be critically challenged, as they are at the root of today's socio-ecological crisis.

The human/animal dichotomy, a mechanism that oppresses both animals and certain animalized humans, must be contested. All oppressive dualisms function as "technologies of domination" for economic ends (Puleo, 2005). As long as these technologies remain unchallenged, they can be used without guilt. In this sense, ending human oppression necessarily entails ending animal oppression.

4. Animals as individualities

Having unpacked the underlying anthropocentric and discriminatory logic at the core of the instrumentalization of animals, the close connection between human and animal oppression, and the necessity of transforming such logic to achieve just and equal post-growth societies, this section outlines an anti-speciesist lens as a means of strengthening the degrowth movement's discourse and impact.

An anti-speciesist framework

The degrowth discourse advocates for egalitarian and just societies that do not exert harmful pressures on ecosystems. To strengthen this discourse, it is crucial to adopt a more comprehensive perspective that decenters the human, and recognizes the intrinsic value of the non-human world. Ensuring "flourishing lives for all" (Hickel, 2020), requires careful attention to the discriminatory processes that are perpetuated, whether consciously or unconsciously, within our societies. This entails critically reflecting on who constitutes this "all" and who might be excluded from it. In particular, sentient non-human animals should be de-commodified and acknowledged as individuals with their own unique experiences. Embracing a non-speciesist position challenges the anthropocentric logic of Western societies and seeks to dismantle the systemic oppression of other sentient beings, which is essential to combat the present socio-ecological crisis. In this context, an intersectional approach to ending all forms of oppression is crucial. Failing to include non-humans risks

undermining the degrowth movement's efforts to move away from the capitalist mechanisms it seeks to challenge.

Incorporating an anti-speciesist framework at the core of the degrowth movement involves several key principles. First, it requires recognizing non-human animals as *individuals* rather than mere "food." Reducing animal consumption alone fails to address the process of "thingification" and does not tackle the underlying roots of contemporary oppressions. Instead, what is needed is a "cognitive and cultural revolution" (Almiron & Tafalla, 2019) that values the lives of all sentient beings, including those used as food as intrinsically important, independent of their instrumental value to human purposes and pleasures. Moreover, challenging the oppression of animals inherently challenges the broader commodification of life, thereby enhancing the liberatory potential of societies. A feminist, anti-racist, anti-ableist, and ecological society must also be anti-speciesist.

Second, the movement must advocate for non-anthropocentric societies where care, conviviality and compassion are extended to non-human animals. In such societies, present and future generations are educated to cohabit respectfully with other species and to reject all forms of violence against them. De-centering the human is essential for addressing socio-ecological breakdown and should be a central tenet of the degrowth discourse.

Third, the degrowth movement should promote policies that protect and regenerate the habitats of other species, taking their needs and interests into account. This includes creating ecological corridors, rewilding spaces, and rescuing and caring for animals harmed by human actions. Living in harmony with other species requires recognizing them as our neighbors, respecting them, and broadening our attention and desire to learn about them (Tafalla, 2022). As Schmitz *et al.* (2023) emphasize, creating "coexistence landscapes" allows humans and animals to share common spaces while continuously adapting to each other.

It is important that policies and actions aimed at transforming the animal industry do not undermine the food security of rural populations whose livelihoods depend on traditional forms of pastoralism. In this context, subsidy reform should be carefully designed to phase out financial support for the animal industry (McAlpine *et al.*, 2009) while simultaneously aiding farmers in transitioning to alternative forms of agriculture or supporting them in restoring or rewilding their land (Perino *et al.*, 2019). Such reforms should be part of a broader, deeper transformation that dismantles all extractive and exploitative industries. This comprehensive approach should include stringent environmental regulations, corrected market prices that fully reflect environmental costs, and targeted subsidy reforms to ensure a just and equitable transition.

Passive restoration efforts contribute to ecosystem recovery, enhance resilience in the context of the climate crisis, and are economically efficient (Beschta *et al.*, 2013). Rewilding can create alternative income sources, including non-material contributions from nature, such as recreational activities and the opportunity to create nature-based economies. Additionally, exposure to green spaces and healthy ecosystems has been shown to offer numerous health benefits, including reduced stress levels, enhanced positive emotions and cognitive functions, encouragement of physical activity, and the promotion of social cohesion (Perino *et al.*, 2019).

Rewilding initiatives should include participatory approaches, ensuring that all stakeholders understand the goals, processes, management strategies, and expected outcomes. Moreover, careful planning is necessary to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts and respect cultural identity and a human sense of place (Perino *et al.*, 2019).

Consumer preferences must also shift, and a critical priority should be ending the promotion of animal products by government agencies. This is essential not only in high-consumption countries but also in emerging economies, where the industry has been actively promoting increased consumption to boost revenue (McAlpine *et al.*, 2009). It is imperative to prioritize the health and livability of the planet, as well as the well-being of companion species, over economic interests.

Further exploration is needed to re-learn ways in which humans can organize societies and everyday practices around respect for non-human companions as a crucial element of our complex ecologies. Some work in this area has been carried out by feminists such as Josephine Donovan, who applies standpoint theory to

supplement a theory of feminist care for the ethical treatment of animals (Donovan, 2006). Others, such as Donaldson and Kymlicka, have developed a framework to include relational obligations towards animals, taking into account the specificities of each type of interaction between groups of animals and groups of humans, based on their history and geography (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2018). It is in the conjunction of existing ideas and many others yet to emerge that common ground may be found.

5. Conclusion

For the degrowth movement to articulate a coherent alternative that addresses global injustices and tackles socio-ecological collapse, it must advocate for dismantling the deep-seated anthropocentrism at the core of Western societies, and adopt an anti-speciesist approach. This framework radically redefines how humans understand their place on Earth and their interactions with other species. Degrowth theories must challenge the commodification of life inherent in capitalist logic, transcending the (neo)colonialist mindset of appropriation and domination of natural systems and the bodies of cohabiting sentient beings. Redesigning the way food is produced is insufficient for advancing a degrowth transition that calls for a paradigm shift away from capitalist relations. It is crucial to question not just what our food is, but rather, who our food is.

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