

Welcome to *Entanglements*, the new podcast from the Jesus College Intellectual Forum. I'm so excited for you to join me, Noah, as we unpack and explore the human-nature relationship.

In the previous episode, I talked to Kate Raworth, author of *Doughnut Economics*. We discussed how modern mainstream economic theory has treated nature as external to the economy and wider society, and how this is unsustainable because it ignores the reality that in fact our economy and society

beginning of 1990, and here we are in 2023, and I'm still here, plugging away, no longer making tea for dear Peter who passed away in 2006, but nevertheless flying his flag for a better, more compassionate world.

Way back then actually, I also made it my mission to see as many of the different types of animal cruelty around the world first hand. I made it my mission because I believe that seeing these things for yourself makes you so much better at describing them, at articulating why they're wrong and how they must stop.

Noah: And I think something that comes across very strongly in your work is not only do these situations, do these conditions seem morally ambiguous, morally wrong, but they also seem to slightly defy common sense. I think one of the most powerful things I've heard you speak about and that I've read in your book is the slight absurdity of how the factory farming system works.

Philip: Absolutely, the big justification for factory farming, keeping animals caged, crammed and confined and feeding them grain, is that we need to do that to feed the world. We've got a growing population, how can we feed them without all of this factory farming? Well, the fact is that factory farming wastes food, it doesn't make it. You take animals out of fields and forest edges, be they hens, pigs or chickens, and you put them into cages in confinement, whether it be battery cages or farrowing crates for the pigs, where they can't turn around for weeks at a time, made to face the wall, or cattle into feedlots. You then have to reconcile the fact that it looks like a space-saving idea, but actually isn't, because you then have to use vast acreages of arable land somewhere else to feed. And we grow that feed, be it corn or wheat or soy, and we feed it to those factory farmed animals who then waste the vast majority of the food value in terms of calories and protein in conversion to factory farmed meat, milk. Now in that equation, we waste enough food to feed 4 billion people, half of humanity alive today.

Noah: But this isn't a new phenomenon, how we've been doing this and the waste involved in this process. You open *Sixty Harvests Left* with quite an evocative description of Dust Bowl America. Would you mind just encapsulating this intensive agriculture, this intensive factory farming, the conditions and the mindset it first arose out of.

Philip: Well it arose out of a genuine tragedy, the Dust Bowl of the US in the 1930s. It still is seen as the biggest environmental disaster to ever hit the US, to ever hit North America.

What happened is—well actually you can trace it back further than that. You can trace it back to the Midwest plains of America that used to be the most abundant grazing land. It was the domain of 50 million bison that would roam those rich prairies followed by all sorts of other animals in a fantastic tapestry of life. They were powered by nothing other than sunshine, rain and grass.

And then of course they were wiped out. They were essentially caught in the crossfire, and you can see how war and the infliction of suffering on people goes hand in hand with the suffering of animals. The bison were wiped out. Settlers were encouraged to go into those



Philip: Well, I think the answer to that question really starts at that consumer end of the chain, in that if you go into a supermarket, you won't find meat and milk generally labelled as this came from animals caged in containers. For eggs, you will, in the UK and Europe, because we made it so. Compassion in World Farming and others led a campaign in Europe to get battery-produced eggs as having to be labelled as eggs from caged hens. That came in in 2004, and what happened is that consumers responded to the point now where most supermarkets and major restaurant chains don't use caged eggs. It had a big market impact.

So what we can see is that animals in factory farms, where it goes on behind closed doors so consumers can't see, and then they're not told because of the lack of honest labelling. What that means is there's a total disconnect. People respond to opinion polls time and time again saying how much they care about animal welfare, the well-being of animals and that they should be treated right. Yet so much of the produce that we eat comes from factory farmed animals.

It's not because people say one thing and do another intentionally. What they're doing is responding as the two parts of our consumptive selves. We are all citizens and consumers. As citizens, we answer opinion polls and we have an instinct of what's right or wrong. We

Philip: Yeah, well I think we can connect with animals, be they farmed animals or wild animals or domestic animals, and the great thing about connecting with animals is that give them a moment and you'll realise that they have their own individual characters, they have their own needs, wants and aspirations. They'll want something from you, or they'll want something that is near you.

For example, our chickens, we have rescue chickens at home and we open the gate and what do they do? They run towards this cupboard. They associate my wife and I coming through the gate with food, we're gonna get something, we're gonna scatter some corn or some flower seed or distribute

this many times throughout and having seen those moments, having lived with Duke for more than 11 years, he's been a big part of our lives. He's been a privilege, and for me it's just obvious that we are all fellow creatures sharing this one planet.

Philip: Well, I think the first thing for us to come to terms with is that time is running out. There is a real urgency. Industrial animal agriculture is not only the biggest cause of animal cruelty on the planet, it is a major driver of wildlife declines. It is integral to the climate emergency that we're now facing. And if we carry on as we are, the UN has warned that we've got just sixty harvests left before the world's soils are depleted, gone. No soil, no food. Game over for all of us. So this really is not just about doing the right thing for animals, it's about doing the right thing for people, not least future generations, for our children.

So that is why I encourage everyone to get involved, and we can all get involved by seizing the power of our plate three times a day. By eating more plants, because over consumption of meat is a major driver of planetary harms. Eating more plants, less and better meat and dairy. And by better I mean from more regenerative agro-ecological sources such as pasture fed, free range or organic. In this way we can give animals a better life and we can ensure a better natural environment. It's healthier for us as individuals and we save the future for our children. It's a triple win scenario, what could be better than that?

