

Animality/coloniality: COVID-19 and the Animal question

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ABSTRACT ORIGINAL

Joining efforts to “decolonize geography”, we offer ‘animality/coloniality’ as a heuristic device for analyzing asymmetrical power relations between humans and nonhumanity. The case of COVID-19 is used to demonstrate the complexity, problems, and dangers of defining and deploying the category of ‘animal’. By illustrating how competing ideas of animality are worked through each other in understandings of and responses to zoonotic viruses, we suggest that delinking animality/coloniality should begin with an embrace of the ‘alien’ Other as a pathogenic constituency. While the perennial Animal question remains an important driver of new research in animal geographies, we caution that it should be taken up with reflexive, critical attention to one’s political purpose and situated location within (colonial) knowledge production. © Alice Hovorka, Sandra McCubbin and Lauren Van Patter 2021.