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Issue Introduction

Lindgren Johnson & Susan Thomas (issue editors)

Work on this issue, for the two of us, began last summer when we started drafting questions for our interview of Carol Adams. In the midst of rereading Adams' work and tossing around what we might ask her, Chick-fil-A famously made various public announcements promoting the "traditional family" and condemning non-heteronormativity. People took, as you might expect, to Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter to register their support or disdain for such a platform, "liking" their chosen side. But they also took, in the midst of a heat wave, to the hot asphalt parking lots of Chick-fil-As across the country to demonstrate. Hitting the pavement, questions of alterity—both human and animal—intersected and coincided, as chickens became the (unrecognized) bodies through which humans, however they might determine their sexual or gender identification, waged their campaigns.

We revisit the events of last summer not only to introduce our interview of Carol Adams, in which she talks at length about the Chick-fil-A campaign—in addition to many other issues, including the place of direct action and the rise of the locavore movement—but to provide a frame of some sort to the essays that follow. This is not a special topics issue, so we cannot claim any intentionally consistent thread running through the contents; nonetheless, much of what follows does speak, in some sense, to the ease with which animals—whether it be their bodies, their suffering, their morality, their lives—so easily get lost. This loss is one that occurs not only in the ways they become, to coin Adams' famous concept, absent referents, but in the ways, even when they are being seen and their voices ostensibly heard, they still face annihilation.

Of course, CAS is all about demonstrating the infrastructures and ideologies that hide animals from our awareness, from any possibility of our attentiveness, so such a focus on these various losses is really nothing new; yet these essays, ranging from literary and legal analyses to an exposure of animal abuse in medical school training, also speak to and move toward the ways that animals *can* be seen and heard, cared for, and learned from.

The issue begins with Josephine Donovan's "The Voice of Animals: A Response to Recent French Care Theory in Animal Ethics." Donovan examines new work in French animal care theory that builds on its American counterpart, as articulated in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics* (2007), co-edited by Donovan herself and Carol Adams. Deriving largely from

Carol Gilligan's groundbreaking *In a Different Voice* (in which Gilligan explores the "different voice" of adolescent girls and, additionally, a corresponding "different ethic"—what Donovan and Adams define as an "ethic-of-care"), American animal care theory seeks to apply this feminist care-ethic by way of hearing and paying attention to animals' own "different voice." Working with texts that have not yet been translated into English, Donovan focuses, in particular, on the ways French care theory so often falls short of true "care" in its allowance of meat eating. As Donovan argues, care theory demands that, unlike Temple Grandin or Aldo Leopold, we not only "see animals in distress," but we pay attention to that communication so that it registers as "sufficiently significant," morally and politically. To truly "care," we must hear and heed "the different voice" of animals, one that, she insists, can easily be discerned.

Carmen Cusack, in "Feminism and Husbandry: Drawing the Fine Line between Mine and Bovine," continues to explore, in her focus on the relevance of feminist approaches to animal suffering, many of the central concerns of Donovan. Cusack examines "the sexual oppression of female cows, which is unavoidable in the dairy industry," and why it ought to be a feminist issue. Yet she also explores—and what makes her article unique—is its consideration of the interconnections of the legal terminology of rape, husbandry, and bestiality, terminology "through which feminist resistance to dairy can begin."

The next essay, "Unpatients: The Structural Violence of Animals in Medical Education," written by Jeff Thomas, illuminates the institutionalization of violence against animals in medical school. Revealing his experience with a live dissection lab at Tulane, Thomas shows, first hand, the ironies of medical school's insistence on harm against animals, a harm that has become so naturalized as not to warrant attention. Thomas also reveals the ways that the law might serve as the means toward the beginnings of animal justice in medical school, as he traces the process he went through in becoming a whistle blower.

Following these two essays written by members of both the legal and medical communities, Kris Forkasiewicz's "Back to the Flesh: On Devaluation and Appreciation of Animal Being in Ecological Socialism" takes us decidedly into the political realm. Forkasiewicz believes that "ecosocialists have arguably made the most headway in providing us with a framework" for exposing "capital's inherent anti-ecological tendencies." Yet, he insists, "something crucial is missing from contemporary ecosocialist theory" in its dismissal of the somatic and bodied being of human and nonhuman animals, asserting further that the

“socioecological crisis is in fact a symptom of our deep-seated alienation from animality and from the somatic dimension of our existence.” While the essay acknowledges that it does not offer solutions, it nonetheless points, through an engagement with the work of Merleau-Ponty, Marx, Ralph Acampora, Joel Kovel, David Pepper, and Sajay Samuel (to name a few), the necessity of ecosocialism’s acknowledgement of its role in alienating the human animal and the concomitant acknowledgement of that human animal as “part of a broader community of earthlings.”

The final essay is Annette Krizanich’s “The Paragon of Animals’? Animal Morality and Wroblewski’s Subversion of Human Exceptionalism in *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*.’ Krizanich examines the ways *Edgar Sawtelle* asserts canine morality, as she not only approaches the text through its loose adaptation of *Hamlet*’s plot, but also demonstrates the relevance of recent studies in neuroscience asserting animal morality and empathy to the novel. Pulling back and taking a much broader view, the essay then compares and contrasts the politics of early twentieth-century evolutionary theory, as represented in Jack London’s *Call of the Wild*, with those of *Edgar Sawtelle*, placing both within their own contemporary cultural and scientific contexts—ones which offer very different views on the question of evolution, canine and human morality, and human exceptionalism.

The Voice of Animals: A Response to Recent French Care Theory in Animal Ethics

Josephine Donovan^{*}

The need to lend a voice to suffering is a condition of all truth.

–Theodor Adorno¹

Abstract

Recent French theorists have expanded upon the American feminist care tradition in animal ethics. Some of these applications are, however, misconceived, allowing, for example, a qualified endorsement of meat-eating and the valorization of Temple Grandin and Aldo Leopold as exemplars of care theory. The French applications go awry, the author contends, because they fail to incorporate “the different voice” of animals in their ethical deliberations, which is at the heart of American animal care theory. Hearing that voice necessarily enjoins against meat-eating or killing animals for human use (both of which Grandin and Leopold endorse). In critiquing the French works the author expands upon, refines, and clarifies American care theory in animal ethics.

Keywords: feminist care theory, vegetarianism, abattoirs

Several recent works in French animal ethics develop, analyze, and expand upon American care theory, as articulated in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics* (2007), edited by Carol Adams and myself. The French works in question include *Tous vulnérables? Le “care,” les animaux et l’environnement* [All Vulnerable? Care, Animals, and the Environment] (2012), edited by Sandra Laugier, and selected articles in *Carol Gilligan et l’éthique du “care”* [Carol Gilligan and the Ethic of Care] (2010).

^{*} Donovan is emerita professor of English at the University of Maine and the author of several articles in animals ethics, including “Animal Rights and Feminist Theory” (1990), “Attention to Suffering” (1996), and “Feminism and the Treatment of Animals” (2006), all of which have been reprinted and the former two translated (into Greek, German, Swedish, and Chinese). She is also the co-editor with Carol J. Adams of *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations* (1995) and *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics* (2007). She can be reached at Josephine.Donovan@umit.maine.edu.

While, in general, these articles enrich our discussion of care theory, certain authors move in directions and reach conclusions that I believe are inconsistent with—indeed incompatible with—the basic premises of care theory. In this article I provide a critique, therefore, of these French adaptations of care theory, hoping thereby in the process to clarify American feminist care theory in general. As none of the French articles have been translated into English, I provide my own translations.

The American care theory in animal ethics derives from Carol Gilligan's foundational *In a Different Voice* (1982), which was based on interviews with adolescent girls who were discovered to be expressing a dissident, indeed subversive, viewpoint that countered the then dominant theory of moral development (that of Lawrence Kohlberg). The girls' mode of moral reasoning was more contextual, embodied, and relational, "concerned with the activity of care . . . responsibility and relationships" than the masculine model endorsed by Kohlberg, which was more concerned with "rights and rules," often making ethical decisions seem like "a math problem with humans" (Gilligan 1982, pp. 19, 28). Feminist theorists applied this "ethic-of-care" approach to animal ethics (see Donovan & Adams 2007).

While in its emphasis on particularistic situationism care theory risks being construed in relativistic, casuistical terms (which I contend the French theorists do), it necessarily encompasses certain ethical principles that constitute an ethical bottom-line. For care theory is at root a political intervention aimed at retrieving and articulating suppressed, marginalized voices (as Gilligan's adolescents), whose viewpoint forms the basis for an ethical critique, and at disclosing, critiquing, and confronting the system doing the suppressing.

In this respect, as I have argued elsewhere, care theory resembles Marxist standpoint theory in its original articulation by Georg Lukács, where the proletariat is posited as the repository of a suppressed perspective or standpoint on its oppression. As subjects being treated (reified) as objects, the workers were seen to evince a critical consciousness (knowing that they were not objects or things) (for further discussion see Donovan 2006, pp. 319-20). Similarly, Gilligan's adolescent girls evinced a critical consciousness—a "negative critique" in Adorno's dialectical conception—toward the system suppressing their dissident voices.

The suppressed standpoint or voice is held under these theories to be privileged because it offers perspectives, unnoticed by the governing ideologies, on the suffering being inflicted. As these perspectives are rooted in the oppressed person's or creature's own situation, they are

necessarily subjective, particularized, and situational, which allows for a more flexible ethic, one adapted to the circumstances of the case. But as *political* theories which identify the world in political terms—feminist in the case of care theory, Marxist in the case of standpoint theory—their point of departure is the determination that some groups have power over others. Their goals, therefore, are liberative, to free the oppressed voiceless groups from such domination. As Carol Gilligan herself emphasized in her introduction to *Carol Gilligan et l'éthique du "care"* (2010), which followed the second French edition of *In a Different Voice* in 2008 (*Une voix différente*), care theory is rooted in radical feminism, "a movement to liberate democracy from patriarchy" (p. 37).² Since, before their voices were silenced by ideological indoctrination, these "young women were speaking truth to power, . . . [expressing] resistance . . . to the norms and values of patriarchy" ["filles parlant vrai au pouvoir, . . . la résistance . . . aux normes et valeurs du patriarcat"] (p. 33), Gilligan's feminist purpose was to retrieve and record these subversive voices, bringing them out of the silence of oblivion. When the oppressed are conceived as being morally significant, hearing their voices is an imperative step in the liberation process because it necessarily counters the ideological system that rules them insignificant, rendering them silent—that system being sexism in the case of women, speciesism in the case of animals.

Applying care/standpoint theory to animal ethics, as I have done (Donovan 2006), means listening therefore to the "voice" of animals, hearing their standpoint vis-à-vis a system that oppresses them. As the silenced voice of women is inherently subversive of patriarchy, so is the silenced voice of animals necessarily subversive to the current speciesist regime of industrialized agriculture and abattoirs, as well as to other institutions abusive and exploitative of animals.

Granted, there are many difficulties in interpreting animals' voices (as there were in bringing to light the standpoint of the proletariat, be it noted; see Donovan 2006, p. 320), but I believe and have argued that such difficulties are not insurmountable (Donovan 2006, pp. 321-23). Indeed, we have millennia of ethnographic evidence to support the claim that humans can readily read animal communication, as Mary Midgley has pointed out (1983, pp. 113, 115, 133, 142). As Catharine MacKinnon pointedly observes, in addressing the question of how animals express their critique: "They vote with their feet by running away. They bite back, scream in alarm, withhold affection, approach warily, fly and swim off" (2007, p. 324). It is not difficult to read these signs. In the end, therefore, the bottom-line ethical criterion for a care-based animal ethic is that "we should not kill, eat, torture, and exploit animals because they do not want to be

so treated, and we know that. If we listen, we can hear them” (Donovan 2007, p. 76). In short, care theory entails ethical responsiveness to the voices of the oppressed, whose expressed desires form the basis for principled ethical action.

The French applications of care theory go awry, I contend, because they do not adhere to this bottom-line criterion. In the remainder of the article I detail what I perceive as their misconstructions. First is their equivocation about vegetarianism, which leads in certain instances to a qualified endorsement of meat-eating; two, the promotion of Temple Grandin, a professor of animal science, and Aldo Leopold, well-known ecologist, as exemplars of care practice. An understanding of the underlying premises of care theory—namely, that (as many of these French theorists note) since care theory is rooted in the articulation and recognition of “a different voice” (the title, as noted, of Carol Gilligan’s original founding document), it requires, in the case of animals, listening to that voice, hearing its communication, and incorporating that communication honestly into one’s ethical decision-making. Were that communication from animals honored, meat-eating would not be an option; nor could Grandin’s nor Leopold’s practice be seen as linked to care theory, for both engage in actions that either directly kill (Leopold’s hunting) or endorse and enable the killing of animals (Grandin’s work in slaughterhouses). The “different voice” of the animal (like the proletarian worker a *subject* refusing to be an *object*) speaks unequivocally that the subject does not want to be killed; nor does he or she wish to be abused, tortured, or otherwise mistreated. We humans can hear that voice, if we listen and pay attention. To ignore or deny what we know the animals are telling us is, to my mind, morally indefensible.

In her article “Le *care*, le juste rapport à l’animal sans voix” [“Care, the Proper Relationship with the Voiceless Animal”] (2012), which offers in general a sympathetic and valuable contribution to care theory, Anne Le Goff reprises the celebrated anecdote with which Peter Singer, recounting his visit with a woman who claimed to love animals while she offered him a ham sandwich, opens his influential work, *Animal Liberation* (1975). Singer criticizes the woman as a hypocrite (since her love for animals obviously doesn’t extend to the pig slaughtered for her lunch), thereby implicitly endorsing vegetarianism.³

Le Goff uses the anecdote to criticize Singer’s (and by extension Tom Regan’s) insistence on impartiality and abstract equivalency in their ethics, which would hold the woman inconsistent in valuing her own dog more than the slaughtered pig whose remains became

sandwich ham. Le Goff argues that “Madame X’s dog and the pig are in no way interchangeable” [“en aucun cas interchangeables”] (p. 40). There is a relevant preferential difference between the dog and the pig, she maintains, which is “morally pertinent” (p. 39). To offer her guest her killed and cooked dog would not be morally equivalent to offering them the similarly processed pig (p. 38). The woman and the “familiar” dog (unlike the “unknown” pig) (p. 37) are “tied” by a “concrete and particular history” [“cette relation qui les lie est concrète et particulière et elle a une histoire”] (p. 40). The woman therefore has a responsibility, “obligations,” to the dog “that she does not have to the pig” [“qu’elle n’a pas envers le porc”] (p. 40).

While it may be true that the woman has more of an obligation toward her dog than to the pig, and that to serve up her dog would (justly) be considered “monstrous” (p. 38), this does not, to my mind, justify killing and eating the pig or make that any less “monstrous.” What is missing in this conversation is, in fact, the voice of the pig. The anecdote provides a classic example of what Carol Adams has termed the “absent referent” (Adams, pp. 40-42), where the living animal is absent in the concept *meat*; in this case, it is the pig who is absent. A dialogical ethic of care requires hearing the voice of the pig, allowing its ethical position to be heard in the discussion. Earlier in the article Le Goff emphasizes that care theory involves making “*a different voice* heard, including equally that of animals” [“pour les animaux également, *une voix différente*”] (p. 35). However, she doesn’t seem to apply this principle to the pig in the above anecdote. But in relying on interspecies dialogue, the essential practice at the heart of feminist animal care theory (Donovan 1990, 2006), one hears the voice of the pig, who undoubtedly does not wish to be killed and eaten.

The solution here, as is often the case, is that *both* the dog and the pig can live. The woman does not have to choose the one over the other. As I have argued elsewhere, “in most cases either/or dilemmas in real life can be turned into both/ands” (2007, p. 76), a passage Le Goff cites later in the article (p. 61) but doesn’t apply to Madame X’s situation.

Le Goff relies in part on American philosopher Cora Diamond’s Wittgensteinian emphasis on traditional practices and concepts as a basis for ethical understanding—the premise that humans are embedded in local, personal “networks of reciprocal responsibility” [“des réseaux de responsabilité réciproque”] (p. 42)—which cannot be ignored when determining proper

ethical responses. It is these personal relations that supercede the universal claims advocated by Singer and Regan, according to both Le Goff and Diamond.

In “Eating Meat and Eating People” (1978), Diamond clearly states that personal relationships should be morally privileged over and above abstract generic qualifications, such as comparable capabilities, laid out by Singer and Regan (Diamond 1991, p. 325). (Singer grants moral status to creatures who can suffer; Regan, to creatures who are conscious and can think in a more or less rational or at least coherent fashion [Singer, p. 8; Regan, pp. 243-48, 280].) However, Diamond also argues in “Anything But Argument?” (1982) that caring about “those who are near and dear” need not preclude caring for “distant strangers” (1991, p. 296). But “the transition from particularistic affections to a more objective hierarchy of values” is not effected solely through rational argument but through “modes of thought” that expand one’s “attentive imaginative response to the world” (1991, p. 296). Such nonrational “modes”—for example, Wordsworth’s poetry—help “develop the heart’s capacities that are the basis for the moral life” (Diamond 1991, pp. 298-99). Diamond’s position here is thus essentially the same as that developed in care theory (as Le Goff points out [p. 41]). It would therefore allow Madame X in the Singer anecdote to care about her familiar dog *and* the distant pig.

Le Goff, however, argues casuistically for a situationist ethic of care that “allows for the consumption of meat in certain cases” [“Une éthique du *care* laisse . . . la place à une acceptabilité de la consommation de viande dans certains cas”] (p. 62). Though Le Goff doesn’t specify this, it would seem that under this ethic Madame X could have her ham sandwich after all.

Diamond, however, offers a different approach. Herself a vegetarian (1991, p. 322), she proposes that alteration of the concept of animals to mean “living creature or fellow creature” (1991, p. 329) is a required basis for vegetarian theory. While common consensus holds that “*a person is not something to eat*” (p. 322), it does not hold that “*a cow is not something to eat*” (p. 322). The required shift in meaning, she seems to imply, may be accomplished through personal emotional contact. “Vegetarianism . . . enable[s] us to meet a cow’s eyes” (p. 333) because we see therein a fellow creature. Thus Diamond relies on emotional communication with a particular animal as a basis for the moral response, because it makes us realize the animal exists as a fellow creature of privileged ontological and thus moral status.

In a more recent article Diamond amplifies this idea more poetically, rooting vegetarianism in our sense of

astonishment and incomprehension that there should be beings so like us, so unlike us, so astonishingly capable of being companions of ours and so unfathomably distant. A sense of its being impossible that we should go and *eat* them may go with [this] feeling. (2008, p. 61)

In stressing that individuals are embedded in a network of reciprocal responsibility, Le Goff notes that while, in the case of a network that includes humans and animals, the reciprocal obligations may seem asymmetrical, with humans bearing the burden of care, “animals bring a counterpart to care” (p. 43) through “the products of their labor or their own body (for [human] consumption or experimentation)” [“le produit de leur labeur ou leur propre corps (pour la consommation ou l’expérimentation)”] (p. 43).⁴ But this does not seem to me to be a fair reciprocal exchange—the animals offering their lives in exchange for care, that is, paying for care with their lives. If we listened to—and really heard—the voices of animals, I doubt we’d find them in agreement with this bargain.

Problems arise, however, Le Goff notes, when one attempts to establish an ethic for the treatment of animals who are outside one’s personal network, reprising the question often raised about care theory—and treated, as noted, by Cora Diamond: how to adapt an ethic developed in the private sphere to public space (p. 50). In other words, how can we universalize care theory, how can we extend it to cover all animals (p. 51)?

In considering animals raised for food in industrial agriculture, which includes, of course, slaughterhouses, Le Goff argues that one can apply care theory even here by mitigating the harsh conditions under which these animals live and die. Here Le Goff turns to American animal scientist Temple Grandin, known for her attempts to ameliorate slaughterhouse conditions so as to “lessen the suffering and stress of the animals” (p. 53). In being “motivated by a concern for the animals” [“c’est un souci à l’égard des animaux qui la fait agir”] (p. 54), Grandin expresses a care ethic, according to Le Goff. By “taking into consideration the concrete needs of cattle or pigs whom she encountered and to resolve their problems” [“à prendre en compte les besoins concrets des boeufs ou des porcs qu’elle rencontrait et résoudre leurs problèmes”] (p. 54), “Grandin has thus effected a work of care” [“Grandin a donc effectué un travail de *care*”] (p.

54). Grandin, then, may be seen as bringing the ethical stance associated with care theory and developed in the private sphere into the public space of industrialized slaughter.

The problem with this interpretation is that, once again, the voice of the animals is lost—this despite Grandin’s claims as an autistic person to have privileged access to animals’ feelings and mentality—that she “has learned to know animals familiarly as well as scientifically” [“appris à connaître les animaux familièrement aussi bien que scientifiquement”] (p. 56). However well Grandin may be able to communicate with animals, she doesn’t seem to have received an important message from them: *they do not want to die*. No animal wants to die.⁵ Regardless of whether cows in the slaughterhouse ramp know that they are about to die (Grandin claims they do not [2001, p. 1377]), we know that if they did know what harm and destruction lay ahead, they would not proceed down the ramp. The fact that they are deceived into moving unknowingly to their deaths is another unethical aspect of the whole slaughterhouse process. Thus, despite her attempts to ameliorate slaughter animals’ living conditions, Grandin fails to hear the animals’ voice. Their communication is lost in the discussion. Their voice is silenced. Since care theory requires listening ethically to what the animals are telling us, and since Grandin seems to be able to ignore and/or deny their message, she cannot be seen as exemplifying care theory. Grandin, in fact, supports meat-eating and the slaughter of animals, albeit humanely (see Grandin 2012, pp. 206-7).

But, beyond encouraging personal caring practices, some of which Grandin exhibits, care theory involves a political critique whose “radicalism” lies in its “unveiling the structure of oppression” [“dévoilement d’une structure d’oppression”] that underlies cruel and abusive practices, as another contributor to *Tous vulnérables?*, Solange Chavel, notes (2012, p. 98). Le Goff acknowledges that Grandin can be (and has been, heavily) criticized on this point: “if she ameliorates animals’ living conditions, she does not challenge the basic principle of slaughter” [“elle ne remet pas en question le principe même de l’abattage”] (p. 59). Some, she notes, have indeed accused Grandin of collaborating in evil (Le Goff, p. 63; see also Grandin 2012, p. 208). Le Goff, however, argues that “questioning an unjust system and transforming it from inside” [“mettre en question un système injuste et de le transformer de l’intérieur”] (p. 63) are what Grandin is doing and that it is such reformist acts that are entailed in an ethic of care. Le Goff reprises the celebrated Heinz hypothetical treated by Gilligan and others (where he is faced with the moral dilemma of whether to steal some otherwise unobtainable drugs to save his wife’s life)

to make her point; namely, that it is the system itself that is at fault. If there were a decent social security system in the U.S. (such as “Medicare for All”),⁶ Heinz would not be faced with the dilemma. The solution is therefore political reform (and in the meantime presumably making the best of a bad system).

But the analogy between an unjust health care system and industrialized animal slaughter is not valid. While the former may lead indirectly to people dying (but could be corrected through legislative reform), the latter is a system whose sole purpose is to kill living creatures. Indeed, the analogy that is occasionally made between contemporary industrialized animal slaughter and the Nazi concentration camps and the Holocaust, even though it is also problematic,⁷ seems more apt. To try to ameliorate an evil system by reforming it, as Grandin does, may make life somewhat easier for some animals, but it still results in their untimely and unsought deaths; and to the extent that her reformist acts help to perpetuate an evil system, they may be seen as collaboration. If the system were to be so transformed as to eliminate the killing of billions of animals, it would cease to exist. In other words, there is no way industrialized animal slaughter can be reformed so as to eliminate its central evil: to do so would be to eliminate the system itself.⁸

The issue of vegetarianism is taken up by other French care theorists. Catherine Larrère, for example, in “Beyond the Human: Ecofeminisms and the Ethic of Care” [“Au-delà de l’humain: écoféminismes et éthique du *care*”] (2010, pp. 151-74), criticizes American care theorists for making vegetarianism “the touchstone” [“la pierre de touche”] (p. 154) of their theory. “Narrowing the focus to vegetarianism greatly limits the possibilities of the care ethic thus applied to animals” [“la crispation sur le végétarisme limite singulièrement les possibilités de l’éthique du *care* ainsi appliquée aux animaux”] (p. 160). Thus conceived, care theory becomes “an ethic of denunciation, quite abstract, which . . . fails to explore the relations between humans and animals” [“une éthique de la dénonciation, assez abstraite, qui . . . n’explore pas les relations entre les humains et les animaux”] (p. 160). Of course, any ethic has denunciatory aspects insofar as it condemns certain behaviors deemed *unethical*. However, care theory is much more attuned to contextual complexities and therefore much less abstract than most ethical systems. To make it completely casuistical or situational—as Le Goff and Larrère do—is, however, to imply that in specified circumstances almost anything goes. Care theory does

allow for more nuanced decision-making than rationalistic abstract systems; however, it need not abjure principle in the process.

In an anguished article included in *Tous vulnérables?* entitled “Pigs and Humans: Regarding an Inherent Tension in Our Treatment of Animals” [“Cochons et humains: À propos d’une tension inhérente à nos façons de traiter des animaux”], Pascale Molinier explores the traumatic response she experienced as a meat-eater visiting a factory pig farm. Acknowledging herself to be “physically nauseated and repulsed” [“physiquement écœurée”] (2012, p. 74) by the conditions she found the pigs to be in, she nevertheless seems unable to take the obvious ethical step of renouncing meat-eating. Her physical revulsion was indeed “a corporal experience [of the sort] that tends to somatize itself *without reflection*” [“un vécu corporel qui tend à se somatiser *sans méditation*”] (p. 74) occasioned by her realization of the “process” involved, the “deanimalization that pigs undergo in industrial farming” [“processus de déanimalisation que subissent les cochons en élevage industriel”] (p. 75)—that these living creatures are there reduced to commodified objects. Allowing that she had entered a state of “*ethical uncertainty*” [“*l’incertitude éthique*”] (p. 75), she nevertheless remains trapped in an ethical impasse: “I love animals, I deplore that they are killed, I don’t like to think about it, but I eat them and I live with this contradiction like the majority of people on the planet” (p. 78). Like Le Goff, Molinier’s solution is to make the farms more humane (p. 78), but, as noted, this is not a solution consistent with care theory.

Another contributor to *Tous vulnérables?*, Marie Gaille, argues in favor of vegetarianism by noting the contradiction inherent in humane farming or ranching, that no matter how well the animals are treated they are still condemned to an untimely and (under current conditions) inhumane death. Following Jonathan Foer’s commentary in *Eating Animals* (2009), Gaille notes that holding a “*caring* attitude” toward farm animals requires a fundamental betrayal, “a lie” [“un mensonge”], making a “deceptive contract with the animal and with oneself” [“un contrat de dupe avec l’animal et avec soi-même”] (p. 224), as when one coerces the cow down the slaughterhouse ramp. While raising animals humanely is laudable, its current impact is negligible, and it still leads to the animals’ deaths (p. 225). Gaille concludes that the only ethical option is to end the system by adopting vegetarianism: “The only choice which truly does justice to the idea of ‘taking care’ of animals is to renounce a diet of meat” [“Le seul choix qui fasse

véritablement justice à l'idée d'un 'prendre soin' des animaux est de renoncer au régime carné"] (p. 225). Gaille, like Foer, ends up with a variation on a virtue ethic (p. 231).

While Gaille sees links between ecology theory, as enunciated especially by Arne Naess (following Aldo Leopold) and care theory (seeing Foer as a closet care theorist),⁹ and hopes for a partnership between them, the difficulties of reconciling "deep ecology" theory with care theory are illustrated by Layla Raïd's attempt to see Leopold as expressing the latter (in her article "From the *Land Ethic* to Ethics of *Care*" ["De la *Land Ethic* aux éthiques du *care*"] [2012, pp. 173-203]). Raïd argues that Leopold's minutely attentive description of the natural world seen in his celebrated *Sand County Almanac* (1949) reflects a caring attitude (p. 182), as does his emphasis on relation (p. 189) and his particularistic contextual approach (p. 196). Moreover, Raïd maintains, his basic ecological vision entails taking care of the environment (p. 201).

As with Grandin, there are ways in which each of their attitudes may be described as caring, but the fact that Leopold endorses and practices hunting and rejects vegetarianism precludes his being seriously considered an exemplar of care theory. Moreover, his romantic construction of hunting as a kind of instinctual, "natural" masculine activity and the wilderness as a masculine preserve has been roundly criticized by feminist care theorists (see especially Marti Kheel, "License to Kill: an Ecofeminist Critique of Hunters' Discourse" [1995, pp. 85-125]). As Kheel notes, Leopold's "land ethic was never intended to extend to 'fellow' individual animals," despite its pretension of "a common ecological community" (p. 96). While Leopold seems to have had second thoughts about hunting after he shoots a wolf and sees the "fierce green fire dying in her eyes" (Leopold 1966, p. 138), he nevertheless never abandoned or renounced the practice à la Tolstoy (see Donovan 2009). Like Grandin, Leopold seems to have been able to overlook or deny what the animal was obviously communicating.¹⁰ That "fierce green fire" is a communication care theorists insist must be registered as ethically significant, never dismissed or overridden.

As Patricia Paperman notes in her contribution to *Carol Gilligan et l'éthique du "care,"* "The Different Voice and the Political Scope of the Ethic of *Care*" ["La voix différente et la portée politique de l'éthique du *care*"] (2010, pp. 79-90), care theory requires an ideological shift in values, in the determination of what counts as significant. This shift is political because it redefines "what is real, what is important and counts" (p. 89). This redefinition disrupts and reconfigures "the 'authorized' version of 'reality,'" a "reality assumed to be common" ["la

version autorisée de la ‘réalité’” “réalité supposée commune”] (p. 87). Just as Gilligan’s original research shifted the governing paradigm so that “the experiences and points of view of women” could be considered “morally pertinent” (p. 88), so general care theory brings to light and “recovers a whole spectrum of phenomena that are visible, present before our eyes, but not noticed” [“recouvre un large éventail de phénomènes vus, présent sous nos yeux, mais non remarqués”] (p. 88). Both Grandin and Leopold see animals in distress, but that animal communication of distress does not register with them as sufficiently significant—morally or politically—as it would for anyone operating under the premises of care theory, which (because it registers the different voice of animals and does not relegate it to the status of insignificance) inherently subverts *speciesism*, the governing ideology—the “assumed common reality” Paperman refers to—which holds animals to be of a lesser ontological and ethical status than humans.

In another contribution to the same book Sandra Laugier similarly insists that “care” is a matter of ethical and political attention to what is overlooked in the governing moral and political paradigm (p. 72). She claims “attention” could be a workable French translation for the English word *care*, because it brings out the ethical and epistemological meanings embedded in the concept.¹¹ Indeed, even in English to say “I care” about something means “it matters to me,” “it is significant, it is something I bother to pay attention to.” As I proposed in “Attention to Suffering: Sympathy as a Basis for Ethical Treatment of Animals” (1996), it is a matter of shifting the ethical focus of our attention, recognizing that, as Cora Diamond notes, that cow, that pig, that wolf, is a fellow creature, a subject, a Thou, an entity of value, of ethical merit. Under the ethic of care we see into the soulful eyes of the cow and pig, the “green fire” in the wolf’s eyes, which moves us to sympathy and compassion; but in seeing and hearing their nonverbal communications—and *because we give ethical weight to those communications, we deem them significant*—we also are led to see, to “unveil,” and to resist and subvert the oppressive systems, ideologies, and institutions that cause these animals needless suffering and death.

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Notes

1. Adorno 2007, pp. 17-18. That Adorno likely envisaged the suffering in question to include that of animals is indicated by his and Horkheimer's scathing critique of animal exploitation in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1988, pp. 245-54).
2. This paper was delivered in English in 2009 (in France) but translated and published in French. I don't know if the English original has been published; I'm therefore using (and translating) the French version. Throughout I have included the French text parenthetically where it clarifies my English translation.
3. This anecdote has also been criticized by feminists for its disparagement of emotion (Donovan 2007, p. 59).
4. Animals can also, Le Goff adds, be "purveyors of care" ["pourvoyeurs de *care*"] (p. 43).
5. Whether animals have a clear conception of death—a point sometimes raised regarding this issue—would seem irrelevant. We know from countless experiences that they flee from harm, from whatever appears to threaten danger, entrapment, pain, and death. We therefore know they do not want to experience these things. Such knowledge is, to my mind, irrefutable.
6. See Donovan, "Attention to Suffering" (2007, pp. 187-88).
7. The most notable recent articulation of the analogy is found in J. M. Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello* (2003, pp. 64-66). Pascale Molinier considers the question briefly in her contribution to *Tous vulnérables?* (p. 72).
8. One possible exception here might be the Gandhi dairies in India, where cows are raised humanely; their calves are not taken from them, and both cows and calves live out their natural lives. Their excess milk is used for human purposes, but the animals are never slaughtered for meat. See Burgat, 2004.
9. Foer's endorsement of humane farming (but which still involves slaughter) would, however, preclude his being considered a care theorist, though he is himself a vegetarian (pp. 238-41).
10. In this episode, as an aside, Leopold mentions noticing that after the wolf was shot (evidently a mother), he saw "a pup was dragging a leg into impassable slide-rocks" (1966, p. 138), but he does nothing to help this wounded animal. How one could live with one's conscience—or indeed continue to hunt—after this is beyond me.

11. Interestingly, these French theorists don't translate the English word *care*, as *soin*, the French word that, in fact, means *care*. Instead, they retain the English word untranslated so as to emphasize the cluster of political and ethical meanings that go with care theory, beyond the act of simply caring for someone, to which *soin* is restricted.

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Feminism and Husbandry: Drawing the Fine Line Between Mine and Bovine

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Abstract

Cows are the victims of rape, but feminists ignore them. Mainstream feminism condemns rape but ignores the connection between the sexual abuse of women and cows because feminist theory and law legitimize human superiority and speciesism. The law and feminists control the definition of the word “rape” so that it specifically excludes the sexual abuse of animals. Though feminist theory, which states that female sex organs should not be commodified or abused, could be applied to the dairy industry, the law’s differentiation between animals and humans allows feminists to indulge in the privilege of being the superior, protected class. Feminists can ignore other females’ sexual abuse and enslavement and enjoy the byproducts, e.g. dairy, because the law requires lower obligation to animals, and debates over the semantics of the use of the word “rape” reinforce that. Feminists should adopt ecofeminist theory because ecofeminism attempts to relate the exploitation and suffering of animals and women, while calling attention to the patriarchal attitudes embodied by the abuse of animals. This essay will give a detailed description of the abuse of dairy cows on factory farms, explain how bestiality law legitimizes sexual abuse of farm animals, and set forth important ecofeminist ideas explaining why feminist theory and praxis should extend to all females, mothers, children, vaginas, anuses, and subordinated victims of abuse regardless of society’s condonation of cruelty.

Keywords: cows, dairy, rape, sexual abuse, cruelty, factory farming, ecofeminism, law, patriarchy, bestiality, vagina, feminism, sexual slavery, milk

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Introduction

Many supposed feminists have been seduced by patriarchal privilege. These “feminists” behave as if they are superior to other female animals because they were born human. Feminists who consume dairy support a patriarchal industry that subjugates femaleness. Instead, feminists should acknowledge dairy as sexual cruelty and sexual exploitation and consider it to be a feminist issue. Female cows’ suffering ought to be a feminist issue because cows suffer gender-based atrocities due to their sex, fertility, and status as mothers. The culturally normative consumption of dairy products among Europeans and European Americans led to the acceptance and legalization of current animal husbandry practices in the U.S., practices which are rooted in patriarchy. In consuming dairy products and disconnecting the patriarchal oppression of women and animals in favor of normative values, feminists fail to see animal husbandry for what it is: rape and sexual slavery/trafficking.

In the past, ecofeminists, who have made connections between the abuse of animals and the abuse of women, have tended either to criticize meat more than dairy or focus on nonfeminists’ abuse of animals. I will discuss why the sexual oppression of female cows, which is unavoidable in the dairy industry, ought to be a feminist issue. This article offers unique insight, however, not simply in its critical view of feminists’ consumption of dairy, but in its consideration of the legal terminology of rape, husbandry, and bestiality. I argue that such a consideration can provide a basis through which feminist resistance to dairy can begin. In the first section, I will give a detailed explanation of what cows experience on dairy farms. In section two, “Queen Dairy,” I will consider why feminists do not embrace female animal abuse as a feminist issue. Next, in “Rape and Slavery,” I will discuss the terms “rape” and “sex trafficking”/“sexual slavery” and how they apply to cows in the dairy industry. In the fourth section, “Feminist View of Rape: ‘Other’ Animals,” I will argue that, because the law differentiates animal husbandry from bestiality, many feminists ignore the rape and sexual enslavement of female animals, contrary to the general tenets of the feminist movement. In the fifth section, “Feminist Concerns,” I assert how human rape and sex trafficking/slavery are feminist issues in order to establish a connection between a cow’s suffering and what feminists believe and practice. Sixth, in “Praxis,” I suggest that feminists ought to abstain from dairy and incorporate into their praxes their awareness of the established connection between human and animal abuse.

Queen Dairy

The dairy industry is directly responsible for the rape and murder of cattle (Matthews 2009). Veal is the culinary term for the meat of male calves, who are the byproducts of the dairy industry (ibid.). Ninety-nine percent of male cows born on a dairy farm will be starved, intentionally atrophied, then killed and sold as veal (Sargeant, Blackwell, Martin, & Tremblay 1994). Of an incredibly small percentage of all male calves, half will be bred to be used as bulls, from whom semen will be forcibly extracted through masturbation by a farmer. The other half of this tiny group of male calves will have their genitals mutilated, i.e. be castrated, and used as oxen (AIPL 2011). Natural, healthy calves typically nurse for several months after birth. However, ninety-nine percent of the male calves born on dairy farms experience one of two fates: they are either separated from their mothers instantly and killed within a few days, depriving the mother and calf of any bonding experience; or they are placed into an isolated and closed crate 3-5 days after birth to restrict movement and induce atrophy, later to be killed and sold as veal.

During their short lives, male calves are fed a milk-powder byproduct in lieu of their mothers' milk, even though this formula, coupled with their intense anxiety and social confusion, typically gives the young animals severe ulcers (Delft Blue 2011). On a dairy farm, milk is not for those who can claim it as a natural birthright (Welchmen & Baust 1987). Milk is for adult humans who demand dairy products (FTC 2013). Because of milk depravation, many male calves starve to death in the first 2-4 hours of their lives (Philip 2005). Their corpses, as veal, still make it to the market, along with their mothers' milk, and into the bellies of human children and adults who have long since been weaned off their own mothers' milk (PETA 2013a).

Most people in the U.S. recognize the cruelty of veal, and the domestic demand for veal has significantly decreased in recent years (PETA 2013b). Yet Americans continue to consume just as much milk, which is why there has been no decrease in the supply of male calves (ibid.). It seems that people have yet to understand the relationship between dairy and veal. There has also been a lag in the empathy felt for female calves as compared to male calves. Unfortunately, the suffering of the female calf literally breeds the suffering of the male calf. America's empathy for male calves will not prevent the mass exportation of the calves' atrophied, anemic corpses to

the global market if Americans continue to demand and supply more dairy than most other nations combined (ibid.).

Like male calves, female calves on factory farms are separated from their mothers immediately, just like male calves (PETA 2013a). Female calves are mostly fed a low-cost milk-replacer formula (ibid.). A female cow is identical to a female human in that she will not produce milk unless she is pregnant (ibid.). Because female calves are useless to the dairy farmer before they can produce milk, dairy farmers will reproductively coerce a dairy cow when she is about a year or two old (Vandermark, Salisbury, & Boley 1951). Every dairy cow will be repeatedly and forcibly raped (a term I will discuss in more detail in a moment) by humans using inanimate objects. The dairy farmer aims to impregnate her so that he or she may later steal her calves and sell her lactations.

Almost every cow goes through traumatic recto-vaginal rape (Vandermark, Salisbury, & Boley 1951). During recto-vaginal rape, the farmer inserts his or her hand inside the cow's anus and pushes into the cow's rectum until the farmer's entire forearm and elbow are inside the cow's rectum (ibid.). To an outsider, it looks as if the farmer is attempting to climb inside the cow through her rectum. The farmer then spreads his or her fingers wide to palpate the cow's vagina and uterus (through the rectal wall) until the cow's cervix is located (Saeng 2013). The farmer grabs the cow's cervix through the wall of the cow's rectum and holds it tightly (ibid.). The farmer then inserts the artificial inseminator into the cow's vagina (ibid.). The farmer feels with both hands until the farmer can plug the inseminator into the cow's cervix, which is being held by the hand that is lodged inside the cow's rectum (ibid.).

Farmers artificially inseminate their cows because they do not have nearly enough bulls since the majority of male calves, deemed genetically unfit for breeding, will become veal (NBC News 2006). Because artificial insemination is a standard breeding practice and the farmer does not receive sexual pleasure from the act, this nonconsensual penetration and insemination is legally defensible against allegations of animal cruelty; in fact, it is not cruelty against animals, as far as the law is concerned, that is the actual issue here, but the possibility of an erotic encounter for the human. If the farmer uses his hands to inseminate the cow, but does not experience pleasure, then the actions are legal (and deemed a necessary aspect of "husbandry"); but, for example, if the farmer receives pleasure while inseminating the cow using his hands or penis, then the defense fails and the farmer has committed the crime of bestiality. The defense

may stand even though the cow may be more harmed during the process of husbandry than by coitus with the farmer (Vandermark, Salisbury, & Boley 1951).

Of course, the law does not currently consider cows to be in the class of victims identified by the term “rape” (Beirne 2009). The word rape identifies unwanted penetration of humans, not animals: humans are the only species allowed sexual inviolability under the law. The legal distinctions that criminalize bestiality as cruelty are drawn to proscribe the farmer’s actions, not to protect the cow’s vagina from unwanted sexual contact. When humans are penetrated without consent, the law serves to reinforce the sexual inviolability of the human body, but when animals are penetrated without consent, the law considers the context, commerce, and quasi-property status of the victims. The farmer’s awareness of the cow’s displeasure during the process does not legally need to signal to the farmer that the penetration should end even if the unwanted penetration and insemination seem cruel. The quasi-property status of the cow dictates that the cow’s suffering is secondary to the farmer’s control of her reproductive organs.

Farmers, in fact, know that female cows suffer (Matthews 2009; Youroffsky 2009). There are bodies of literature and schools of ritual revolving around the best time to remove a calf from a mother cow in order to minimize her sorrowful bellowing for her lost calf, which is annoying to the dairy farmer (Apley and Hilton 2003; Chai Online 2013; “Cow Psychology,” 2009; Pirelli & Zollinger 1993; Self Sufficiency in Style 2013). Numerous scientific studies have shown that the female cow is literally drained of her vitality on the dairy farm, suffers from depression, and dies prematurely in most instances (“Get the Facts,” 2013). Female cows used for dairy die within one-eighth of their natural lifespan for reasons relating to disease and exhaustion (ibid.). The female cow is constantly subjected to the removal of the milk that she knows should be given to her missing calf (ibid.). It is unknown if, after the first year, the cow, who is maternal by nature, can predict that the calf she is carrying will be stolen (and in every case either starved and murdered, or raped and murdered), and whether this stress adds to her degeneration.

Most farmers milk cows twice each day, 365 days of the year (“AG 101: Milking Parlors,” 2012). Some milk cows three or four times per day in order to increase milk production by 10% (ibid.). Milking machines are routinely used, allowing about 16 times more milking per hour than hand milking. Four rubber-lined cups are used to pump milk from the cow’s teats (ibid.). The warm milk flows into a collecting bin and travels by a vacuum pipeline into a cool

storage tank (ibid.). The process of milking takes around five minutes (ibid.). When the cow is not being milked, she is waiting around to be milked (ibid.). Because cows suffer anxiety, farmers milk cows in the same order during each milking in order to routinize the process (ibid.). The routinization further mechanizes the cow. As each awaits her turn, she not only witnesses abuse inflicted on her relatives and cohort, she anticipates the discomfort that will be inflicted on her. She waits to be groped, tugged, latched onto, pumped, and voided.

Cows are prone to infections like mastitis, which they physically experience as a woman would (Natterson-Horowitz & Bowers 2012). Cows infected by mastitis experience hot, reddened, swollen, infected udders, and will also experience congestion (“Cow's Milk: A Natural Choice?: Stress, Antibiotics, Mastitis, and Pus,” 2005; “How Much Pus Is There in Milk?” 2013; PETA 2013a). Mastitis, which is present at any given point in millions of dairy cows worldwide, causes the cows’ teats to excrete pus into the milk, which will be sold on the general market (ibid.). Over one billion pus cells are allowed in every USDA approved gallon of milk, and one million or less per teaspoon (ibid.). A normal cow living a healthy life might be able to overcome early symptoms of mastitis through her own immune system (ibid.). However, the use of growth hormone to increase milk production causes the cow to develop larger infections, since the cow’s mammary glands are unnaturally large (ibid.). The cow’s natural immune system is unable to handle these sizeable infections (“Dairy Cow Lameness,” 2013; Grandin 2012; “Our Perspective of Lameness in Dairy Cows has to Change,” 2005; Shearer 2010).

A cow will flinch or kick when an infected udder is touched (“Dairy Cow Lameness,” 2013; Grandin 2012; “Our Perspective of Lameness in Dairy Cows has to Change,” 2005; PETA 2013a; Shearer 2010). The cow’s natural milk production is reduced, but the dairy farm’s demands do not lessen despite her natural protestations to the abuse inflicted by milking (ibid.). Just like humans, cows living under this stress often bellow, eat excessive carbohydrates, and become noticeably depressed; along with depression, a general fever may be present with mastitis, as well as shivering, rapid weight loss, and appetite loss (ibid.). It has become common knowledge that dairy farmers will administer high doses of antibiotics to cows in order to reduce the pus cell content in milk (ibid.).

It is not uncommon for a cow in a natural environment to give birth to several calves over her 20-25 year lifespan (The Destructive Dairy Industry,” 2013; “Meet the Animals,” 2013). But

as a dairy cow, she will typically become worn down and spent between the ages of 3 and 5 years old (ibid.). As a commodity, she will totally depreciate and will be sent to slaughter.

Rape and Slavery

The conceptual and legal restriction of the term “rape” to a class of human victims is speciesist because the term describes and is applicable to the experience of cows on factory farms. Though a clean parallel need not be drawn between human and bovine victims, an analysis of the definition of rape can be undertaken on behalf of cows because their vaginas and anuses are nonconsensually penetrated by humans. Crucially, however, humans may be the class of victims contemplated by the law, but humans are also the class of perpetrators who appropriate nonconsenting humans’ vaginas. Similarly, humans appropriate nonconsenting cows’ vaginas.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines rape as “[t]he penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim” (FBI 2012). Because the terms for rape can vary widely, e.g. sexual assault, battery, sexual imposition, etc., the FBI relies on a general definition for research purposes (ibid.). Plain readings of statutes can vary from their case law interpretations. For example, South Dakota’s rape statute §22-22-1 limits the crime of rape to scenarios in which penetration occurs by force, coercion, or threats of immediate and great bodily harm. Yet, in South Dakota, case law indicates that the definition of rape can include psychological coercion (State v. Klautt 2009). This is true in Oklahoma as well, where the statute requires force or threats, but the case law indicates that coercion rises to the level of force (Okl. St. § 1114). In this paper, a general definition, supplied by the FBI, is relied on to demonstrate that, in its most general terms, the abuse discussed in this paper qualifies as rape, by definition, because of the class of perpetrator and the penetration of a vagina and anus, despite the species distinctions between the class of victims. The law is not merely designed to protect human victims. It is designed to punish human perpetrators who, without consent, penetrate anuses or vaginas using an object.

According to the FBI’s definition of rape, when cows are penetrated by hands and objects, they are raped. They are also nonconsensually inseminated by farmers (Cusack 2012b).

Nonconsensual insemination is, quite simply, a species/gender/sex neutral term that identifies insemination that occurs without the victim's consent (*ibid.*). Under the law, animals cannot consent to interspecies sex, which is one reason why bestiality is always illegal. Theoretically, even if animals enjoy sexual activity with humans, they cannot consent to it. Like teenagers, who cannot legally consent to otherwise enjoyable sex with adults, animals cannot consent to having sex with humans under the law. There is no legal recognition of an animal's sexual consent. Thus, animals can never legally consent to being penetrated or inseminated by humans (*ibid.*). One reason often cited for why animals and children, under many circumstances, are foreclosed from consenting to sex is because our society ostensibly protects vulnerable populations from power disparities involving sexual relations. Control and domination negate the authority required to consent. Rape laws typically explain that any force—whether physical, psychological, or situational—used to obtain consent or achieve penetration constitutes rape. Force is a dynamic of power.

Rape can be linked causally to patriarchy. Literature explaining the relationship between patriarchy and rape is plentiful, but one succinct summary might state that patriarchy, which is defined by unequal and unjust power dynamics, plays out in overt displays of control that result in vulnerable populations' submitting to sexual activity at the discretion and exclusive desire of the dominant party (Laura & Buchanan 2001). Despite the fact that the subservience of women and animals to men has been documented in history, in the study of language, empirical data, conceptual models, and economic realities, people generally refuse to analogize the rape of female humans and animals (*ibid.*). As Laura and Buchanan explain, "[t]o suggest that the rape of nature and the rape of women reflect as peers of the same dominant patriarchal socio-cultural tradition of the West is indeed a provocative claim" (*ibid.* p. 57). It may be important for feminists to recognize the literal similarity as well as use the term "rape" to describe the nonconsensual penetration of cows even if some feminists do not believe that human rape and animal rape are identical (Cusack 2012b). The importance exists not only in vetting feminist ideology and fortifying praxis; the recognition of a broadened definition of female suffering aids in unifying the feminist agenda and strengthening the front against patriarchal tactics. Feminists should argue for the inviolability of all female bodies, rather than condone the government's authority to dispense with a consent requirement in commercial contexts. If the rule were broadly written and feminists had to choose the side of protection for all vaginas or conditional and

contextual governmental regulation of consent for some vaginas, then one would hope that feminists would choose the former.

Rape, as an act of control, serves as a metaphor to connect the subjugation of femininity in patriarchy. The use of the term “rape” can move beyond the literal into the metaphorical and philosophical. The metaphorical use of the word does not lighten the literal use. The metaphor can add depth to the use of the term and another level of complexity to the feminist understanding of how the control of nature connects to patriarchy. In “An Ecofeminist Cassandra,” Francesca Reynolds writes, “[Women’s] capacity for childbearing, our menstrual cycles mirroring the lunar cycle, our patterns of caring for our homes, children and surroundings give us intimate connections with the earth and an instinctive urge to protect it ...[A] “superiority complex” has led man to exploit nature believing it belongs to him” (1989). Until recently, men have taken women and the earth because they believed that they were the possessors and everything else was a possession. Humans still take animals’ bodies and sexual byproducts because they believe that they can and do own them, and women who participate in this are participating in patriarchy. Lisa Tyler further explains the relationship between dominion of animals and patriarchal violence (2008):

Feminists can begin to develop analyses of violence and non-violence which show the connections among kinds of violence: violence against the self...violence against others...violence against the earth...perhaps even global, systemic, economic violence...This would involve showing ways in which patriarchalism underlies all such kinds of violence and itself breeds violence. (Tyler 2008)

Since the use of the term “husbandry” is euphemistic language designed by the oppressor to express an acceptable context for nonconsensual penetration and insemination, the use of the word “rape” may serve as a constructive device to counter the word “husbandry.” Where husbandry romanticizes and softens the brutality, the word rape conjures an image of forced sexual penetration. Even so, the term rape fails to identify all of the acts of defilement, deprivation, and objectification present in husbandry, such as milking, starving, and killing. When feminists do not acknowledge the connections between the dominations and exploitations of female bodies and continue to use the word husbandry, which serves to distance them from their own role in rape and other atrocities and from other female bodies, they “alleviate their guilt” (Laura & Buchanan 2001). Even though these actions symbolically and literally objectify

the female anatomy and motherhood, feminists ignore such damage by classifying animals as “tools” for human pleasure. The acceptability of the linking, the acceptability of the objectification, and the acceptability of ignoring “exist[] because they fall within cultural norms that have been defined by patriarchal values” (ibid. , p. 63).

Ecofeminists, who connect feminism and ecological wellness, have long discussed rape of the land or of “mother earth,” which is a universal metaphor (Phillips 2004). The metaphor and the physicality of rape converge when ecofeminists discuss the rape of animals on dairy farms, and not just the rape of the land. Ecofeminists and feminists may use rape as a literary device and/or as a literal term. As Brittany Shoot insists, “[E]cofeminism is not a rigid belief system but instead incorporates many aspects of feminist activism under one environmentally conscious umbrella” (Shoot 2010). Though ecofeminists ought to be wary of hypersexual metaphors that restrict women to the role of flowers, fruits, or other overly sexualized depictions of nature, in this context, the sexual metaphor is purposive, and thus appropriate (Kolodny 1975). The metaphor can serve to fortify rather than disempower the ecofeminist agenda. Ecofeminists can use the term “rape” to metaphorically describe the destruction of the land. Pollution and the misappropriation of resources no doubt create subsequent trauma for the earth, animals, and people as well (Cusack 2012a). This would be a second, broader metaphorical context. But the rape of cows and women are distinct from the rape of the earth, and closely resemble each other, in that a vagina/anus is penetrated without the female victim’s consent (Laura & Buchanan 2001). During animal husbandry, a victim’s vagina and anus are repeatedly penetrated by hands and objects without the victim’s consent, and the victim is routinely nonconsensually inseminated for the purpose of achieving what results from the rape—a living offspring who can be sold, raped, and enslaved (ibid.). Thus, the metaphorical use of the word rape by ecofeminists can help to connect the abuse of the earth, animals, and humans, and simultaneously bolster the literal use of the term, especially insofar as it defines a rapist. Though the victims may change, the general infliction of domination by the “rapist” remains constant between the metaphorical and the literal female and across species of female animals.

Irrespective of whether feminists use rape as a metaphor or as a literal description, they ought to contemplate dairy as a feminist issue because it involves the intentional objectification of femaleness. If feminists recognize the rape of cows and the rape of nature as being similar to the rape of women, then feminists stand to gain. Feminists who recognize the patriarchal abuse

inflicted on animals and nature will have an easier time recognizing those same arguments that have been used to subjugate women (ibid.).

Arguing that feminists should focus on humans instead of on animals only weakens feminism because this line of logic must concede that a vagina and anus can be appropriated for a commercial purpose without consent (ibid.). Focusing exclusively on humans requires feminists to tacitly accept patriarchal institutions and settle for the victimization of an alternative vagina—the cow’s vagina. Any permissiveness towards the objectification of the vagina whatsoever can potentially weaken feminism. Feminists may argue that feminism is about women, not vaginas, but in the eyes of the oppressor, no doubt, women are oppressed, in part, because of the oppressor’s desire to control vaginas.

Feminist View of Rape: “Other” Animals

Most feminists accept animal husbandry and do not see it as rape. The vast majority of feminists, however, do not accept bestiality. Bestiality and husbandry, however, are analogous for many reasons discussed below. The main reason that feminists accept husbandry and not bestiality is that husbandry is legal and normative in that it approaches animal sexuality and reproduction clinically and scientifically, exploiting it as commodity and emptying out any possibility of erotic encounter. The logic behind this is analyzed *infra*, and I conclude that the logic is an insufficient justification for feminists’ participation in the dairy industry.

Bestiality is prohibited in every state either directly or under cruelty statutes. More than 60% of states specifically outlaw bestiality, but “[e]ven if a state does not specifically proscribe the activity, it may be covered under other aspects of a state’s sex crimes code or even the animal cruelty law” (Wisch 2008). Since, legally, animals can never consent to sexual activity (as discussed earlier) with a human, sexual contact with an animal can be considered to be cruelty (AS Sec. 11.61.140(a)(6)-(7); Gormally 2006; Hall 2005; H.R. 5566, 2010; Muessig 2009; Sheridan 2011; Singer 2001). This overlap between the quasi-property status of animals and the protective role that the government plays in both facilitating sexually exploitive activities that, as I have argued, constitute rape, and shielding both animals and humans from the possibility of erotic relations further calls into question how society draws lines between husbandry, rape, and bestial sex.

Utilitarian scholars, like Peter Singer, have argued that the act of pleasuring an animal ought not to be considered in terms of right or wrong (Singer 2001). Singer's philosophical argument lines up with that of the law in the sense that morality is not the underlying rationale for cruelty or bestiality statutes (*ibid.*). Following *Lawrence v. Texas*, morality seems to no longer be a legitimate state interest, or if it is, then this interest is weak (2003). Bestiality, which was specifically raised in the dissent by Scalia in comparison to human sodomy, is no longer regulated on a morality basis (Singer 2001; Wilkins, Christensen, & Selden 2005):

State laws against bigamy, same-sex marriage, adult incest, prostitution, masturbation, adultery, fornication, bestiality, and obscenity are likewise sustainable only in light of Bowers' validation of laws based on moral choices. Every single one of these laws is called into question by today's decision; the Court makes no effort to cabin the scope of its decision to exclude them from its holding. (*Lawrence v. Texas* 2003, pp. 563-564)

Bestiality is largely regulated by cruelty statutes. The state draws a bright line—humans and animals cannot engage in sexual pleasure together. Irrespective of whether it is an immoral “crime against nature” to give an animal pleasure, bestiality is forbidden. Despite what Singer may assert, an animal's apparent enjoyment, e.g. an animal's affection, turgidity, humping, or orgasm, could not equate with consent (Singer 2001). A domesticated animal or an animal in captivity could be coaxed, trained, or subtly forced by the need to please the hand that feeds. This dilemma is eliminated by the law, which is clear: even if animals desired to provide or receive pleasure, humans are not to conflate our relationship with animals with the erotic (AS Sec. 11.61.140(a)(6)-(7), 2013). The quasi-property status brings with it a custodial responsibility (one that, contradictorily, of course enables killing), which strictly proscribes sexual partnership between humans and animals. Questions have been raised about where the strict line begins. Ingrid Newkirk once discussed “making out” with a dog. Anecdotally, humans “kissing” animals does not seem to be where the line begins. Frequently some statutes discuss touching or penetrating genitals, but other cruelty statutes are silent. At any rate, the insertion of an object inside of an animal's vagina or anus for human or animal pleasure would undoubtedly constitute cruelty.

Admittedly, bestiality is distinguishable from husbandry in a number of ways, yet bestiality and animal husbandry nonetheless involve highly similar activities, e.g. nonconsensual penetration of the cow's anus and vagina for the purpose of creating a sexual reaction in the

animal, i.e. orgasm by the bull, or reproductive reaction by the cow. A crucial difference between bestiality and husbandry is that in bestiality, the effect is to conjure eroticism, and in husbandry, the intended reaction is mainly procreative. The law cannot outlaw feelings of interspecies *eros*, only actions. The law permits animal husbandry as an exception/defense to sexual contact with and hence abuse of animals (AS Sec. 11.61.140(a)(6)-(7), 2013). This exception/defense recognizes that animal husbandry violates animals sexually, e.g. requires cows to be raped, which is penetration without consent. However, husbandry is treated as exception/defense because it is “accepted” by the farming industry (ibid.). In jurisdictions where bestiality is specifically prohibited or where it is prosecuted under cruelty statutes, statutes frequently state to some effect that “[i]t is a defense to a prosecution under this section that the conduct of the defendant...conformed to accepted veterinary or animal husbandry practices” (ibid.). The government’s implementation of this exception/defense seems like bootstrapping. The government permits the exception/defense simply because the farmers who want to penetrate cows to cause a procreative reaction find it to be an acceptable practice.

Another crucial difference, which is intent, appears to be ambiguous, at best. If a man or woman contacts a cow’s vagina with the intent to experience pleasure or cause the cow to experience pleasure, then the contact is considered abusive. But masturbating a bull or fisting a cow, as described above, is entirely legal as long as the farmer does not intend to cause pleasure for pleasure’s sake and is attempting to turn a profit from the byproducts that result. In other words, any resulting pleasure on the part of the animal or human must be unintentional, while any displeasure on the part of the animals may be disregarded, i.e., would not constitute cruelty, as long as the contact that caused the displeasure is “accepted” by the industry (“A Report on the Accuracy of Net Content Labeling of Milk,” 2013). This logic fails to rationalize the government’s muddy line between cruel, nonconsensual penetration of a cow’s genitals and accepted nonconsensual penetration of a cow’s genitals.

Many feminists, like farmers, believe that the treatment of cows in this manner is acceptable, which is to say that it is not legitimately rape. Many feminists may feel that the rape of cows is not a feminist issue because it is not analogous to the rape of humans, even though the widespread rape of millions of animals for their sexual byproducts’ commercial benefit is not a reality that feminists should simply accept, ignore, or treat at an arm’s length (Brownmiller 1975). Feminists may want to ignore the analogy precisely because they believe that comparing

female animals to humans damages the feminist movement. But so much literature on the subject of patriarchy stands for the proposition that all subordinates are unified to some extent by their oppressed status. At the very least, feminists need to explore how this tenet includes animals. There may be feminists who outright do not sympathize with cows and will never abandon dairy for any reason, including selfish reasons (Griffin 2011). This essay cannot convince them to do so, and may infuriate them. Yet, sooner rather than later, these feminists may want to familiarize themselves with the work of Carol J. Adams and other ecofeminists before finalizing their opinions in order to clear their consciences of the possibility that they are participating in the widespread implementation of patriarchy.

There are feminists, who may otherwise be sympathetic to the suffering of animals, who choose to accept this widespread form of sexual enslavement because it is legal and it is “accepted” by their communities, the dairy industry, and the government. Perhaps those who are inclined to be sympathetic toward animal suffering just do not have the gumption to apply feminist philosophy to dairy and swim upstream against convention. Since the law and western culture accept husbandry, and animals’ commodification and exploitation is so widely unseen, it might be that feminists are not ignoring cows’ suffering as much as they are not making the connection or resisting the privilege and products that are connected to the abuse (Jones 2011). The reason why each individual feminist (and some ecofeminists) choose to distinguish between the experience of a female cow and a female human in practice is unknown. What *is* known is that feminists are aware of what milk is, and they are generally aware of how the milk in their yogurt, cheesecakes, and lattes is produced (ibid.). Because they do not know the reality of what exactly happens to cows, they cannot or do not make the connection between feminist platforms and bovine suffering. Since the law enforces female human’s superiority to female cows, and mainstream society encourages feminists to accept the privilege, then some feminists may not only fail to seek out information, but are content to accept the privilege. They may *a priori* denounce theoretical connections between humans and cows.

Generally speaking, vaginal rape, anal rape, and nonconsensual insemination are practices that run contrary to feminist values about the inviolability of the body, female liberation and equality, and treatment of the body (Cusack 2011). Typically, feminists also may denounce business dealings that involve duress or oppression. It certainly cannot be said that the

dairy industry has been cleared by the feminist movement as acceptable and lauded as a feminist mechanism. There is no popular feminist theory stating that dairy *is* feminist.

Feminist Concerns/Feminist movement against rape and sexual slavery in a nutshell

Since the 1970s feminists have studied, protested, and rebelled against sexual oppression that ranged from domestic sexual assault to the international sex trade. Marital rape rates have lowered, and the UN now pressures nations to conform to standard definitions and measures in the fight against sexual slavery (Alabaster 2011; “Sexual Trafficking Facts,” 2013; “Spousal Rape Laws: 20 Years Later,” 2000). Nonetheless, the list of abuse is endless: the average age of females who enter pornography and prostitution is 12 years; about 150 million women have been the victims of female genital mutilation; the trafficking of women and children generates 19 billion dollars annually; about 75% of the 500,000 sexual assaults annually reported in the U.S. are committed by someone that the victim knows; 90% of child victims of sexual assault know their attackers, who are mostly married or committed men (“Female Genital Mutilation,” 2010; “Informational Resources, Statistics,” 2013; “Megan's Law—Facts about Sex Offenders,” 2013; “Rape and Sexual Assault,” 2013; “Sexual Trafficking Facts,” 2013).

While these facts paint a sad picture of our world and the struggle that still lies ahead for feminists, the picture of the life of a dairy cow, as described in section two, portrays the general problem that feminists fight against and many of the same problems presented by these statistics. Yet feminists still pay for dairy, still serve it at women’s studies conferences, and continue to ignore the sexual abuse of cows. Using the FBI’s definition of rape, cows and women both suffer rape. Technically speaking, any being with orifices can be raped. If the word “woman” would be substituted with “female” in many feminist sound bites, then statements about the hostile treatment of the female’s vagina and forced sexual labor would still compel feminists to react and fight on behalf of women. If the concept of femaleness, sexual penetration of orifices, and reproductive rights were broadened a bit, then opposition to husbandry might easily fit into mainstream feminism. Such a broadened concept could also elucidate the reality that cows, who are mothers, daughters, and mammalian females, deserve the attention of the feminist movement because they are exploited in a fashion that compares to some of the gravest atrocities committed against humans.

There are those feminists who are so strongly speciesist that they would oppose the creation of any interspecies parallel (Hall 2005). Lee Hall argues why that parallel is drawn by the patriarchy and why it should actually be employed by those ecofeminists who support the notion that the treatment of cows is a feminist issue:

In an essay written at the dawn of the modern women's movement, Alice Walker described pornography depicting African-American women as resembling non-human animals and even excrement—connecting all three. Readers might have found that Walker's observations cast a disturbing pall over their personal lives as they began to awaken to the everyday distortions of human relations within a patriarchal society. In light of the connections Alice Walker makes, Catharine Mackinnon's comment that the human-animal dichotomy is only one step removed from the animate-inanimate division becomes especially stark. In our society, in which animals are widely considered food products, to see the sexual object as non-human is one step removed from the consumption and elimination of that object. (ibid.)

In the context of husbandry, where a vagina is used as an object because it is a vagina, where a teat is abused for profit because it is a teat, and where a baby is starved and slaughtered because it is its mother's baby, the parallel is both literal and philosophical.

Praxis

Feminists, who have, most basically, challenged patriarchal notions of proprietorship of sexual organs, should not only eliminate dairy from their own lifestyles and practice strict veganism, they should actively encourage feminist groups to eliminate dairy from feminist events, and strive to incorporate ecofeminist attitudes and perspectives into their feminist activism, praxis, and analysis. The connection between the abuse of animals and humans is so well established in ecofeminist, feminist, and criminal justice literature that an educated and eco-conscious feminist would almost have to intentionally avoid studying or discussing the connection. Feminist scholars gain little, if anything, by depriving themselves or their audiences of insight into the connection. Feminists should take professional, personal, and professional responsibility for demonstrating the global importance of abstaining from all harm to any animal.

Discussion of gender differences in attitudes towards animals requires much more study in the context of factory farming and systemic abuse of the bovine species. Feminists ought to get their hands dirty with the literature and analyze how patriarchy correlates with sexual abuse of animals and consider how greater awareness, activism, education, and praxis among the general population—and not just among feminists—can lead to the elimination of sexual abuse among cows and bulls.

Conclusion

The dairy industry is nothing short of the organized, large-scale rape of cows. The majority of mainstream feminists have failed to recognize this, as well as the connection that exists between women and cows. Feminists must not remain disconnected from the truths about “otherness” and patriarchy, but must boycott dairy as a part of their feminist praxis and politics. Failing to do so would ignore the ground covered by feminists that clearly demonstrates that patriarchal oppression is not unidirectional or solely existent in male-on-female crime.

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Unpatients: The Structural Violence of Animals in Medical Education

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Abstract

Physician training is an acculturation process in which students learn to emulate the practices, beliefs, and values of their professors. While many students are encouraged to express empathy and appreciation for their “first patient,” a human cadaver, medical education teaches students to devalue the lives and ignore the suffering of animal “unpatients” used for dissection and research. Teaching medical students to hurt animals is untenable morally and scientifically. This article utilizes three synergistic methodologies: a case study of a 2012 frog vivisection at Tulane University; an expanded theory of structural violence that exposes the methods by which animal suffering is made invisible and its infliction is thereby justified; and a pragmatic discussion of useful frames for health workers seeking to fight animal oppression. All three of these approaches are centered on reader action and activism.

Keywords: dissection, vivisection, medical school

For them, the difference between what happened and what awaited them anyway was one of timing. And for us the difference was visibility. This time, we had to watch.

– Matthew Scully, *Dominion*

Introduction

Physician training is an acculturation process in which students learn to emulate the practices, beliefs, and values of their professors (Cooke, Irby & O’Brien 2010, pp. 31-61). Cadaveric dissection is the preeminent rite of passage for first year medical students. Much attention is paid to this in student memoirs, in which students often try to cope with the

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dehumanization of their “first patient.” Poirier (2009, pp. 46-47) reviewed more than forty medical student memoirs and described the profound, disturbing, even existential moments many have when dissecting their first cadaver. Some do not acclimate to cutting into dead flesh and report having nightmares wherein, for example, they are dissected or their cadaver screams (Marcus 2003, pp. 370-373).

Another acculturation process receives little attention in medical student memoirs or academic journals, yet it shares the same goals, techniques, and symbols of cadaver dissection. This under-studied and under-analyzed ritual is the dissection or even vivisection of animals. As Paul Farmer notes, “an anthropology that tallies the body count must of course look at the dead and those left for dead. Such inquiry seeks to understand how suffering is muted or elided altogether. It explores the complicity necessary to erase history” (Farmer 2004, p. 308). This article hopes to do just that, beginning with a case study of violence against animals; following with a discussion of how violence is institutionalized in the medical profession; and concluding with suggestions for how health workers can frame animal rights for their patients and in their research. All three of these approaches are centered on reader action and activism.

First Unpatients

For most physicians, their first animal dissection occurs during middle or high school biology (Oakley 2009, p. 61). Thus, before the “first patient” cadaver of medical school, physicians-in-training will have “unpatients,” uncounted because they are “unhuman.”¹

Though precise statistics are unavailable, academic estimates from the 1990s indicate that six to twelve million animals are killed for pedagogical dissection (as opposed to research) in the United States each year (Oakley 2009, p. 60). Frogs are the most frequent victims of American high school dissections (King et al. 2004, p. 476). The following case report was selected for examination because of my own personal involvement and the case’s ability to represent what occurs in so many classrooms and laboratories.

At Tulane University in New Orleans, USA, on February 3, 2012, a group of future physicians (including the author) and their professor vivisected six frogs.² The students were studying the electrophysiology of muscle action potentials by recording the strength of muscle contractions. In previous weeks, the students ran computer programs to illustrate these

principles. Research has reported equal learning outcomes among live and computer- or textbook-based dissection alternatives, which generally cost less money (Balcombe 1997, pp. 23-24) – so there was no justification for killing or even using animals at all.³

Laboratory preparation involved taking un-anesthetized frogs between two fingers, sticking an ice pick-like probe through the back of the frogs' necks and stabbing it inside the frogs' bodies, the goal being to sever the spinal cord and (theoretically⁴) render the frogs insensate to pain. A laboratory technician performed the procedures. After the first frog's spine had supposedly been severed, the technician laid the frog on a metal tray and proceeded to the next one. A few minutes later, the first frog tried to jump, indicating that the spinal cord had not been severed, though the neck had been violently lacerated. The pithing (spinal cord severance) was done recklessly and exposed the animals to additional suffering. Furthermore, the technician mutilated another frog "in case anybody needs another." This was a horrifying procedure to watch. Many of the students were aghast and voiced their concerns, to no avail. Apparently, many of the students had not yet been taught that these frogs were unpatients, a matter to which we will return.⁵

After the frogs were unsuccessfully pithed, my group received one. The procedures carried out on the frogs required knowledge of anatomy, but the students received neither this nor training in animal care. We received a handout that instructed us to skin the frog's leg to expose the sciatic nerve, the largest nerve in the body (Figure 1). Our frog was clearly alive and gasped agonal respirations throughout the procedure. I asked the professor if it was necessary for the frogs to be alive and he replied that, though "the muscles would still contract even if the frog were dead, it is necessary for the frogs to be alive." In fact, if the first part of his statement was true, the second must be false and there was no justification for keeping the frogs alive or in pain.



Figure 1 from Frog Muscle Lab Manual (© BioPac 2000).

The frogs were moving about as they were skinned alive. The inadequacy of the pithing was pointed out to both the teaching assistant and the professor. The professor laughed when he saw a frog moving and told us to place metal rods through its flailing arms, essentially telling us to crucify the frog. He did not euthanize the frog or even attempt to perform the correct paralyzing technique. He stated that “frogs do not feel pain like we do.” There is no evidence to justify such an extreme contention, and a reasonable scientific assessment would lead to the opposite conclusion. Indeed, the vivisection was premised on the similarity between human and frog physiology.

We proceeded to flay the living frog, expose the sciatic nerve, and attach electrodes and a force transducer to the frog.⁶ Since our frog was not paralyzed, the muscle and nerve of interest were undergoing spasmodic contractions, rather than the large, idealized, artificially-induced contractions that were to be measured as the goal of the lab. Not only was the frog feeling the vivisection, this fact totally invalidated the data we were collecting. Students in another group inadvertently severed the frog’s femoral artery and that frog bled to death on the dissecting tray.

Yet it was not stopped. The spectacle lasted for ninety minutes. The professor made no attempt to euthanize the frogs once groups were finished with their work. I asked the teaching assistant if I could kill the frog, and she said yes. I ended the suffering as quickly as possible by cutting his or her brain apart. She then informed the rest of the students that the more “humane” way to kill the frogs would be to cut the throats and sever the carotid arteries. I left.

Institutional Action and Reaction

The only reason to write this article is to investigate the institutionalization of violence in medical schools and to spur others to action. What follows is a recounting of how institutional pressure can be brought to bear to help animals. Activists should use all resources at their disposal. One of these is the law, which, as we shall see, has its limits.

Federal laws govern the treatment of animals at research institutions receiving federal funding. The repercussions for infractions can be severe for a university, up to and including losing National Institute of Health (NIH) funding (NIH 2012). To quote the NIH guidelines (2013), institutions are required to:

- ensure that individuals who use or provide care for animals are trained and qualified in the appropriate species-specific housing methods, husbandry procedures, and handling techniques;
- ensure that research staff members performing experimental manipulation, including anesthesia and surgery, are qualified through training or experience to accomplish such procedures humanely and in a scientifically acceptable fashion;
- provide training or instruction in research and testing methods that minimize the number of animals required to obtain valid results and minimize animal distress;
- ensure that professional staff whose work involves hazardous biological, chemical, or physical agents have training or experience to assess potential dangers and select and oversee the implementation of appropriate safeguards; and
- ensure compliance with any initial and continuing education regarding State requirements for the licensing of veterinary or animal health technicians.

I believed that the first three of these had been violated and reported it to the university's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Reaction was slow until I wrote again to say that if nothing was done, I would take the matter to somebody who would be interested. An investigation was quickly opened, and the official apologized for being out of town. I recounted the events and was assured in writing that "any individual who wishes to express to any official of the administration any concern that he/she may have regarding the animal care and use program may do so without the fear of reprisal." A later email assured me that I would remain anonymous, as a professor might be displeased with a whistleblower.⁷

Officials noted in emails that the chair of the department, the chair of the university's IACUC, and the federal Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare had been notified. Subsequent course vivisections were put on hold, and the professor was asked to respond to the charges in writing.

I soon received another email outlining the steps that had been taken. The committee found that the vivisections violated animal use guidelines. The next week, the students in the class and two officials from the IACUC were given a presentation by the professor in which he explained his errors and provided proper training in frog anatomy and care (if mutilating and killing frogs can be considered "care"). He, not a technician, would now perform the pithing and would euthanize the frogs immediately after assignment completion.

The class continued with a frog heart lab (Figure 2). The goal was to demonstrate the electrical conduction system of the heart, which is cheaply, easily, and non-invasively seen in human EKGs.



Cut through the pectoral girdle to expose the heart in the pericardial sac.

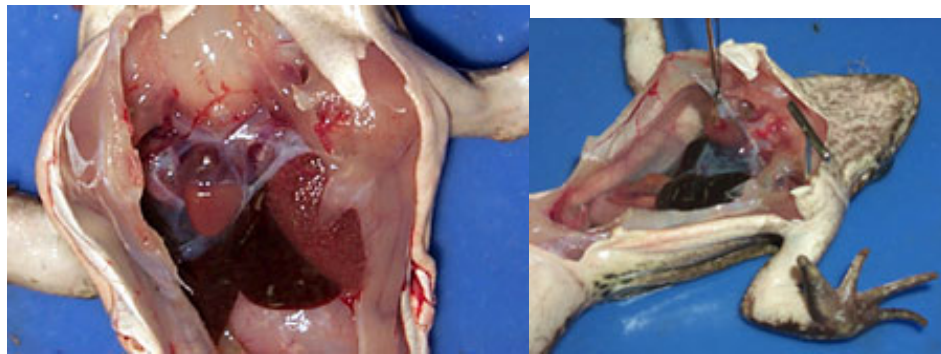


Figure 2 from Frog Heart Lab Manual (© BioPac 2000).

I requested an alternative learning experience. To his credit, the professor permitted a literature review covering the same physiological mechanisms and time frame of the lab. No retributive action was taken. It seems, then, that reporting an animal use violation did diminish suffering. These palliatives were far short of what I had hoped for and what is ethical. However, they followed the law, which showed itself to be useful in bringing about some level of change.

Nine states (California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia), as well as numerous universities and local school boards, prohibit mandatory dissections and allow for student choice. California was the first state to pass such a law and arguably did so in response to tenth-grader Jenifer Graham. Graham had received a failing grade for conscientiously objecting to dissecting animals. She and her mother filed suit on religious freedom and anti-discrimination grounds. During litigation, the California legislature passed a student choice law, and Jenifer performed an independent study in lieu of dissection.

The case was settled in 1990. Her mother's efforts led the Animal Legal Defense Fund to set up a national Dissection Hotline, which has many tools for student action.⁸ Similar suits have been filed and settled before the constitutional merits have been decided, illustrating an avenue for potential activism (Kramer 2006-7). It should be noted that even when opting-out is mandated by law, its availability is not usually mentioned by teachers (Balcombe 1997). While the law provides some means of resistance, then, it is often not accessed.

Acculturation to Structural Violence

Johan Galtung (1969) coined the term "structural violence" to refer to "indirect" violence as opposed to "direct" violence committed with arms. Although direct and indirect forms of violence are often interrelated, one can further conceptualize structural violence to include all systemic forms of oppression: poverty, racism, patriarchy, and so forth, which are evident "as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances." Not to add speciesism to this list is to exhibit our own biases, ones that are perhaps even more deeply entrenched than the rest.

Of course, vivisectionists actually lacerate, flay, and execute defenseless creatures – direct violence, in Galtung's (1969) parlance – but indirect violence to animals is perpetrated via the ideology of speciesism and is precisely what enables such direct violence. To truly redress the injustices foisted on non-human animals requires dismantling the intellectual superstructure that institutionalizes structural violence (Marcus 2005, p. 220). Assaulting theoretical justifications for cruelty is a task suited to physicians and other medical personnel for two reasons. First, they are culturally vested with the moral authority and academic training to resist and document abuse. Second, they are chiefly responsible for *creating* and maintaining the tools and ideology of speciesism and the abuse it spawns, at least in medical education, for animal cruelty is a constant throughout the long training periods of all biologists, from children to graduate students to professors.

In the foundational text of modern science, *Discourse on Method*, published in 1637, Descartes describes animals as "soulless automata" and "beast machines," a perception which leads to the following enlightened hobbies, as Jean de la Fontaine describes them (Kimbrell 2010):

There was hardly a Cartesian who didn't talk of automata....They administered beatings to dogs with perfect indifference, and made fun of those who pitied the creatures as if they had felt pain. They said the animals were clocks; that the cries they emitted when struck were only the noise of a little spring which had been touched, but that the whole body was without feeling. They nailed poor animals up on boards by their four paws to vivisect them to see the circulation of blood. (pp. 35-36)

Not much has changed, as we shall see.

Recent opinion polling demonstrates a remarkable discord between biomedical researchers and the public on the ethics of animal experimentation. In a poll of life science professionals, 92% agreed that "animal research is essential to the advancement of biomedical science," while only 3% disagreed (Cressy 2011). The views of the American public are much different. In a 2010 Gallup poll, 59% supported and 34% opposed experiments on animals (Gallup 2010). What might explain this disparity?

One answer to this question is that the lifelong acculturation process of medical education encourages animal cruelty. Oakley (2009) summarizes an account of reticent children's resorting to barbarism over a single dissection:

One study showed that a desensitization process can occur during a dissection. The study, which examined sixth-grade students' behaviours [sic] during the dissection of fetal pigs, found that many students appeared to become hardened to the procedure as it progressed, describing themselves as becoming "immune" or "adapted" to the situation. Toward the end of the dissection, some students had progressed from initial apprehension about dissecting the animals to outright mutilation of them: students were observed plunging dissection tools into pigs' heads and bodies, and decapitating the animals and parading their heads around the classroom. (p. 61)

Though certainly dissection is different from vivisection, Dorian and Arluke (1997) view fetal pig dissections by middle-schoolers as the first step in life science education towards viewing animals mechanistically. Furthermore, there is much suffering even in this process, as fetal pigs are taken from slaughtered sows.

A drastic ethical change in attitudes towards the use of animals was also found in first-year medical students during their participation in dog vivisections, which led from reluctance to rationalization and even pleasure (Arluke & Hafferty 1996). On the other hand, qualitative studies have demonstrated that animal dissection weeds out those, largely female, who feel greater empathy for animals and might otherwise pursue medicine (Capaldo 2004). Similarly, a Swedish study noted striking differences in views on animal research among students on other professional paths outside the sciences (such as law), with much greater support among future life scientists (Hagelin, Hau & Carlsson 1999).

For medical students, the responsibility and struggle to empathize with patients is perhaps the most discussed aspect of physician identity, comprising nearly ten thousand articles in the PubMed database (Poirier 2009, pp. 156-8). But attempts to discern empathy for animals in medical student memoirs will reveal little more than silence or, more optimistically, a vacuum to be filled.

Animal experimentation is not a topic seen as worthy of discussion in Poirier's (2009) study. Nevertheless, at least one of the authors in her study does include two pages that just barely begin to engage (only to quickly disengage) with empathic responses to animals. Craig Miller (2004), writing as a surgical resident, pens the following:

There's a certain subset of the radical-types that I call "fuzzy animalians." These are the mostly-female vegetarian-types (by the way, what about the rights of lettuce? The head was alive before it ended up doused in vinaigrette in a wooden bowl!) who complain loudly about the mistreatment of anything that's cute and/or furry – hamsters, baby seals, etc. – but always scream for someone to step on whatever spider crosses their path. Then they say (and actually believe) that they are defenders of animal rights! I guess to them only a critter with fur or feathers has rights; spiders and cockroaches only have the right to meet the bottom of a Birkenstock! (p. 99)

Students become the next generation of teachers. In a survey of 5,000 high school biology teachers, 98.8% reported dissecting animals during their own education. 72% contended that dissection "is a valuable part of school biology education," while, surprisingly, 66% believed students should be offered an alternative to dissection (King et al. 2004, pp. 480-481).

Finally, disregard for animals is evidenced even in the highest statement of values of prestigious professional societies. Consider the American Psychological Association's (2011-2) guidelines for ethical animal experimentation:

Experimental procedures that require prolonged aversive conditions or produce tissue damage or metabolic disturbances require greater justification and surveillance. These include prolonged exposure to extreme environmental conditions, experimentally induced prey killing [sic], or infliction of physical trauma or tissue damage.⁹ An animal observed to be in a state of severe distress or chronic pain that cannot be alleviated and is not essential to the purposes of the research should be euthanized immediately.

Reading these standards makes one wonder if any abuses would be prohibited and what insight experimental prey killing—and the induction of animal psychological suffering--could possibly have for the amelioration of human psychological suffering.

Framing Animal Rights for Physicians

Social movement participants coalesce around fluid identities in a dynamic socio-psychological process that sociologists call “framing,” which utilizes changes in repressive contexts in order to increase movement support. Organizers initially join together with similar grievances. They then frame the movement, or construct its ideology around shared enemies, goals, symbols, and tactics. This identity is designed to “inspire and legitimate” movement participants, as well as to unite them. Uniting around an ideology facilitates action, engenders trust, and fosters commitment of movement participants (Benford & Snow 2000).

Framing also constructs a public identity to advertise to those outside of the movement. This public identity can be disparate from the internal identity that movement participants proffer as their own motivation. Promulgating a different public identity is a strategy to garner support from people outside of the movement who would not usually support it. Or, the “true” ideology may be repressed because of laws or social norms (Oliver & Johnston 2000). This section will further describe frames useful for health workers.

For physicians, the paramount frame of concern is the physician-patient relationship. Since duty to patient comes first for the physician, there is no balancing act between patient and

animal welfare per se. It would be a serious breach of professional conduct if a physician were to suggest a course of action for a patient because of the physician's feelings about animal rights. However, compassion for humans is congruous with compassion for animals in that harming animals is detrimental to human health. This is why physicians concerned with animal rights must focus on the health effects of meat.

Heart disease and cancer are the two largest killers of Americans. It thus seems appropriate to demonstrate the relationship between health outcomes and animals. Thorogood, et al. (1994, p. 1669) conclude that there is a "roughly 40% reduction in mortality from cancer in vegetarians and fish eaters compared with meat eaters." Specifically, red meat consumption is correlated with higher rates of colorectal, esophageal, liver, and lung cancers (Cross et al. 2007). Thus the American Institute for Cancer Research recommends that individuals limit their consumption of red meats and avoid processed red meats entirely (2010, p. 18). The American Heart Association (2011) states that "many studies have shown that vegetarians seem to have a lower risk of obesity, coronary heart disease...high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus and some forms of cancer." The Association advocates replacing red with lean meats, while limiting processed meat (bacon, hot dogs, sausage, etc.) (Lichtenstein et al. 2006, pp. 83-85). Unfortunately, even basic health information can easily be drowned out with the perilous lies and sophisticated distortions of the meat industry, which has scuttled governmental prescriptions to eat less meat for more than forty years (Nestle 2007, pp. 38-60). The American Heart Association might not be able to counteract McDonald's propaganda, but physicians can.

Many health workers are encouraged to harm animals for the sake of research and human progress. But the unavoidable pain and suffering in some fields of animal research might not be as promising as some assure us. Of the almost one hundred and fifty clinical trials of anti-inflammatory agents based on mouse studies, not one has succeeded in humans (Seok et al. 2013). Furthermore, the researchers report that there is essentially no statistically valid relationship between the changes in gene expressions of mice and humans suffering burns, trauma, or sepsis ($0.00 < p < 0.10$). Interestingly, a reporter discovered that when this review was submitted to *Science* and *Nature*, it was rejected. A lead author noted that "reviewers did not point out scientific errors." Instead, "the most common response was, 'It has to be wrong. I don't know why it is wrong, but it has to be wrong'" (Kolata 2013). As we have seen throughout this article, some scientists, in the ostensible name of science, reject science when it comes to the

treatment of animals. Researchers on the inside of the apparatus of animal exploitation can prevent great suffering for both animals and human patients if more appropriate models of human disease are used.

Conclusion

Although compassion is arguably the most vital of a physician's attributes, a myriad of studies report that the peak of physicians' concern for patients is at the outset of medical education, with a steady decline thereafter (Cooke, Irby & O'Brien 2010, p. 99). Many medical students have written eloquently of their first cadaver dissection, but when we look to their opinions on animal vivisection, we often see scientists' callousness and disregard for life itself.

Recognizing the emotional toll that cadaver dissection can take, some educators have instituted journaling activities concurrent with human dissection (Poirier 2009, pp. 161-162). One professor has students compile a mock case report of their "first patient": where she or he worked, how she or he lived, and so on. Another invites a chaplain to a Service of Reflection and Gratitude for students wishing to grieve or give thanks before the remains are cremated (Carter 1997, pp. 214-215).¹⁰ These various rituals, in which students create "histories" for their patients and also acknowledge their patients' deaths, help future physicians cope with their feelings and anxieties over using corpses. They are also attempts to address—and reverse—the decline in empathy physicians experience throughout their education.

Like cadavers, animal unpatients cannot speak, they cannot organize, they cannot revolt, they cannot overthrow. Yet, unlike cadavers, these unpatients live—and are killed—at the hands of healers. Physicians are given the training, freedom, privilege and, less frequently, the resources to work at the limits of life and death (Farmer 2005, pp. 157-158). However we read, write, and act, it is vital to keep the suffering and liberation of the voiceless at the forefront of our minds. The enormity of the task means there are many more avenues for attack. This article has suggested several.

The structural violence of medical education, which perpetuates both indirect and direct violence, is only one facet of the panoply of crimes committed against innocent animals. The character of speciesism should be familiar to any who know, witness, or study injustice. Does meaningful social justice not also include animals, for whom Nobel laureate Isaac Bashevis

Singer wrote, life “is an eternal Treblinka” (1982, p. 271)? If so, then meaningful social justice demands that we ease the suffering of animals, and meaningful medicine must be to true to its call to, at the very least, do no harm.

Notes

¹ This is derived from “unpeople” in Curtis (2004).

² I have kept others’ names confidential. To quote John Robbins (2001): “My criticism is not with the people who eat an ice cream cone, or a bowl of yogurt, or enjoy some cheese. My criticism is with the dairy industry for putting out ads that are deceptive and untrue, and that trick people, and do so quite intentionally” (111).

³ There are many free digital dissection tools online, as a Google search will reveal.

⁴ There is no scientific way to gauge pain in those who cannot communicate. As Mogil (2009) notes:

Human self-ratings of pain, using both questionnaires and scales, are reliable, accurate and versatile for the measurement of both experimental and clinical pain. Nonetheless, the subjectivity of these measures has led to a decades-long search for surrogate biomarkers. To date, no objective surrogate with acceptably high sensitivity and specificity has been found and independently replicated (283-294).

Experiments designed to cause pain are undertaken “ethically,” in spite of the absence of scientific validity. And with regard to this laboratory, cutting the spinal cord leaves the head and neck sensate to pain in humans and presumably in other animals.

⁵ A survey of middle and high school students found that 48% objected to animal experimentation (Oakley, 2009: 61).

⁶ The electrodes produced muscle contractions, much as a defibrillator shocks the heart, while the force transducer measured the strength of the contraction.

⁷ Retribution is a common concern: only 3-5% of students performing dissections voice objections, while 30-70% object in general, depending on how the survey question is phrased (Balcombe, 1997: 22-23).

⁸ The National Dissection Hotline can be reached at 1-800-922-FROG. There is also an online portal at the National Anti-Vivisection Society, http://www.navs.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ain_edu_dissection_hotline.

⁹ This sentence was removed from the guidelines sometime between May 2011 and May 2012. An email to the American Psychological Association seeking comment was not returned.

¹⁰ Tulane Medical School has a similar ceremony each spring.

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Back to the Flesh: On Devaluation and Appreciation of Animal Being in Ecological Socialism

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Abstract

This essay aims to show that, for all its insights into the historical-structural dynamic of the global socioecological crisis, ecosocialism (at least as typically expressed in theoretical work such as that of Joel Kovel) suffers from a detachment from reality *as co-inhabited* by vulnerable, flesh-and-blood beings, both human and nonhuman. Its roughly positivist treatment of subjectivity in general, and animal, bodied subjectivity in particular, may leave it divorced from lived experience, i.e. an alienated mode of praxis. Fortunately, its roots in Marx's brand of relatively open, non-reductionist materialism, offer an opening through which an injection of somatological "thinking of the concrete" might be administered. In view of such perceived compatibility, I argue for an enrichment of ecosocialist theory and practice with attention to these heretofore neglected aspects of bodily being. This in turns opens the way toward a reformulation of ecological Marxism in non-speciesist terms – in acknowledging the primacy of the carnal dimension of human life, we are thrown back upon our existence as one modality of animal life among myriad others. The essay concludes with a consideration of issues of technological reification in capitalism and the vision of an ecosocialist future, as well as a series of questions about whether ecosocialism can practically incorporate a somatic dimension.

Keywords: ecosocialism, somatology, animal being, Marx, materialism

The mainstream environmental movement has thus far failed in its efforts to ameliorate the global socioecological crisis, which only worsens by the hour. Since the first public acknowledgement by governing elites of the global ecological crisis, by the Club of Rome, in their 1972 manifesto, *The Limits to Growth*, the problems described therein have only become

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more grave. In the thirty years since the publication of the document, ecosocialist Joel Kovel writes, the global human population had increased by 62% to reach 6 billion by the dawn of the new millennium (and is estimated at over 7 billion in 2013 [US Census]); oil consumption had increased from 46 million barrels a day to 73 million; coal extraction from 2.2 to 3.8 billion metric tonnes; the number of cars globally had gone up from 246 million to almost three times as many – 730 million, the usage of trees for paper had doubled, as had the rate of fishing; on top of that, human-caused carbon emissions went up from 3.9 million metric tonnes in 1970 to about 6.4 in 2000, contributing to an acceleration in global warming (2007a, pp. 1-3).

Notwithstanding the purported interest of political and economic elites in designing policies to remedy the situation, state policies have done nothing to slow the rate of destruction and decline. A staggering discrepancy has evolved between the amount of popular attention the crisis receives and the growing socioecological distress societies and communities all over the world experience today. This massive disparity calls for an explanation, which neither Green parties nor environmental NGOs have managed to provide.

So vast are the challenges posed by the global crisis¹ that activists are at a loss to know where to concentrate their energies. Should they, or we, focus on global warming and ecosystemic devastation? Impoverishment and misery of a significant percent of humanity? The immense insecurity and anxiety related to the contraction of the public sphere, and to the cramming of urban populations into spaces of relentless sensory overload? The outrageous socioeconomic inequalities within national societies and in terms of the entire globe? One could – as theorists and activists often do – treat these distressing problems as separate issues. But they are largely of one cloth, a totality of interconnected structures of power and oppression.

Ecosocialists have arguably made the most headway in providing us with a framework for grasping this totality. Marx's critique of capitalism as a historical formation remains perhaps the most powerful theoretical tool we have for deciphering the complex distortive relations propelling the ecological downward spiral we find ourselves in today. Ecosocialist scholars like Kovel, David Pepper, and James O'Connor have exposed capital's inherent anti-ecological tendencies, like its perpetual degradation of conditions of production, its limitless expansion as a basic condition of survival, and creation of a socially polarized world system in which it is impossible to adequately address the ecological crisis (Kovel 2007a, p. 38, Pepper 1993, O'Connor 1997). Others like John Bellamy Foster have additionally attempted to trace ecological

concerns in red politics back to Marx himself (2000). The strength of the ecosocialist critique lies in steadfast historicity – its commitment to trace the ever-shifting configurations of capitalism over time in order to reveal the hidden mechanisms of its most calamitous tendencies.

Yet something crucial is missing from contemporary ecosocialist theory. Notwithstanding its insights into the nature of capitalism's ecological contradictions, ecosocialism has remained hobbled by an abstract, even positivist conception of subjectivity which has reified consciousness by neglecting the concrete, *somatic* nature of our relation with others, both human and nonhuman. That is, existing Marxist approaches largely fail to take into account the experiential, intersubjective reality of live bodiment.² Without a powerful injection of somatology – the theory of body-as-subject – into both its *Weltanschauung* and its method, socialism is not and cannot be truly "sensuous" and materialist. Worse, unless it grounds itself in a robust ethics and politics of bodiment, it is at risk of reinforcing the very instrumental reason it seeks to challenge and deconstruct.

The key to overcoming this aporia within ecosocialist thought, I want to suggest, lies in the "animal question" – i.e., the question of our relation both to other sentient beings and to our own animality as natural beings. Only by reclaiming the basis of consciousness in bodiment might we build a proper theoretical basis for a praxis of universal liberation. On the one hand, a serious treatment of the related "animal question" would open our eyes to the plight that other-than-human animals suffer at the hands of contemporary civilization. On the other, it would lead us to meditate on our own social needs and historical possibilities *as* bodied animal beings. The two projects are intrinsically intertwined. The cardinal ethical precept of socialism is that, "like the carrying capacity of a bridge (which is measured neither by the strongest of its pillars nor by the average strength of its supports, but by the endurance of its weakest pillar), the quality of society is to be measured by the welfare of its weakest member" (Bauman 1991, p. 263). The fact that human economic and social production are currently organized around the ruthless slaughter of billions of other sensitive, suffering beings, beings much like ourselves, is therefore of critical relevance to the socialist project in general and to an ecosocialist politics in particular. My thesis, broadly, is that the socioecological crisis is in fact a symptom of our deep-seated alienation from animality and from the somatic dimension of our existence. This alienation is constitutive of capitalism, but is not in fact reducible to it.

The Ecosocialist and the Neglected Animal Other

Establishing "body" as the central theme of radical thought, pointing *beneath* the focus on material-ideological social structures driving human alienation from nature, will challenge and potentially reinvigorate ecosocialism. It will also help shed light on the immense suffering of billions of sentient creatures with whom we co-inhabit the earth, yet whose needs we almost completely disregard. The ethico-political imperative of our day goes beyond the importance of tackling capitalism. The fundamental problem, flared up by capitalist exploitation, but ultimately traced back to the heart of civilization itself, is the *hatred of the animal*. Without it, the rise of capitalism as the contemporary setting of ecological destruction would not have been possible; and socially-mediated devastation of nature can at the moment be said to be the axis of the global crisis, due to the finite resources on the earth and the dependence of all living organisms on the continued health of our biosphere. Suppression of animal life, including the self-inflicted strangling of the human animal, accounts for human estrangement from the natural world, and makes destructiveness a permanent historical feature of civilized humanity. The dimension of lived experience, in which real tragedies occur and where loss can be felt, has been petrified.

Unknowingly, ecosocialists are part of the problem. Pepper explicitly acknowledges ecosocialism to be an anthropocentric position in which nature is ultimately considered through the prism of its usefulness to humans: "*eco-centrism* purports to make social justice part of a wider justice required for all life forms, whereas when the chips are down ecosocialists put human interests first" (1993, p. 53). Furthermore, he states openly that he is "anthropocentric enough to insist that nature's rights (biological egalitarianism) are meaningless without human rights (socialism). Ecosocialism says that we should proceed to ecology from social justice and not the other way around" (1993, p. 3). Here we have, as usual with ecosocialists, nature in the abstract, with virtually no mention of animal bodies, each of which is a single, irreducible nexus of lived experience. Kovel phrases his thoughts more promisingly. He holds that "recognition of ourselves in nature and nature in ourselves, in other words, subjective as well as objective

participation in ecosystems, is the essential condition for overcoming the domination of nature, and its pathologies of instrumental production and addictive consumption" (2007a, p. 230). However, this can still mean that humans have priority over ecosystems, not to mention over other animals. With reference to the latter, Kovel recounts Rosa Luxemburg's thoughts after she had witnessed a beating of a buffalo:

the one that was bleeding, all the while looked ahead with an expression on its black face and its soft black eyes like that of a weeping child who has been severely punished and who does not know why, what for, who does not know how to escape the torment and the brutality (...) I stood facing the animal and it looked at me: tears were running from my eyes – they were his tears. One cannot quiver any more painfully over one's dearest brother's sorrow than I quivered in my impotence over this silent anguish (...) Oh! My poor buffalo! My poor beloved brother! We both stand here so powerless and spiritless and are united only in pain, in powerlessness and in longing. (Bronner 1981, p. 75, quoted in Kovel 2007a, p. 230)

This is a rare account of feeling for a fellow animal from a Marxist revolutionary. But lest we take it too seriously and expect an ecocentric vision to follow, Kovel is quick to comment:

Such an ethos in itself does not ecosocialism make – that would require what Luxemburg did not do, namely, elaborate a consciously ecocentric line in her socialist practice. Nor does it imply a fundamentalist position on animal rights, which forgets that all creatures, however they may be recognized, are still differentiated and that we make use of other creatures within our human nature. Nor does this imply a deep-ecological affirmation of "wilderness" that splits the wild away from the human and would just as soon dispense with the latter. (2007a, p. 230)

On the very same page that he proclaims his desire to re-insert humanity into nature, Kovel re-establishes a deep separation of both. He unfairly and simplistically denigrates animal liberation from human exploitation as a fundamentalist endeavor, and deep ecologists' appreciation of wild being as anti-human. Kovel's misrepresentations might signify mere confusion. But I think they reveal a more profound and troublesome tendency.

What is ironic about Kovel's eagerness to distance the Marxist tradition from *sentiment* is that even the "hard-nosed" ecosocialist awakens every day afresh to the vivid urgency and

ambiguous possibility of the restorative project at hand, the latter comprehended as an expression of felt solidarity and not "merely" the playing-out of a grand historical narrative. In other words, there is a contradiction here between, on the one hand, the *quotidian* and phenomenological "thickness" of socialist consciousness and practice and the abstract, positivist, and masculinist commitment of the tradition itself, which suppresses and indeed devalues precisely those sensuous aspects of our being and relatedness (including empathy) which in reality are the well-springs of all solidarity, all critical thought.

Much ecological Marxism, then, suffers from an implicit allegiance to positivist philosophy when it comes to its understanding of animality, bodiment, and nature. The key features of positivism can be summarized as follows: it assumes a separation and independence of subject from object, whereby objects are knowable beyond any relation to the subject; objects appear to be "natural," neutral, and eternal rather than grounded in a historical and socially mediated meaning they have for the subject. Thus, positivism can speak of objective facts as if these were wholly independent from the subject's engagement with them. Relatedly, it can also postulate that a "subjective bias" is an unwarranted intrusion of the subject into objective observation. Engagement is frowned upon as a potential distortion of consciousness (Bologh 1979, p. 5).

Under a positivist lens, whether of liberal or socialist regimes, ecological stability seems limited to the instrumental management of external environment – an odd piece of surrounding cosmic matter. The earth and its inhabitants are effectively degraded to an inert, dead mass, so worthless as to be wholly neglectable beyond opportunities for exploitation. To a positivist, both human and other bodies are seldom more than sophisticated machinery with sets of reflexes either hard-wired or developed through mechanical repetition. What sets humans apart from the rest of the natural world is the way their minds *use* their bodies to manipulate nature. As Kovel explains, "when we're talking about working, we're talking about a human quality, which is specifically human, namely to produce our life, to produce ourselves. We're the animal that produces. We don't have fixed instincts, but rather we have culture and the capacity to imagine a world and to produce it" (Kovel 2007b). Supposedly, we are to infer that other animals are confined to an existence driven exclusively or primarily by automatized instinct, unimaginative and devoid of culture. When the theme of animality appears in Kovel's work, it usually serves as a rhetorical springboard used to boast of human uniqueness. As materialists, Marxists *have to*

acknowledge human animality by virtue of their emphasis on the physical nature of being. But there is a twist: humans always strive to be more than "just" animals, seeking the realization of truly human (i.e., non-animal) species-being. This happens through production. As Engels wrote:

the evolution of the human brain can be understood as "arising from labor, that is, from the conditions of human subsistence, and from its transformation by means of tool making, simply because it was at this level that human beings interacted with nature, as real, material, active beings who must eat, breathe, and struggle for survival (...) From the moment human beings begin to *produce*, human history begins distinguishing itself from the history of animals. (quoted in Foster 2000, p. 235)

Furthermore, even though Engels noticed that other animals can at times *plan* their responses to their environment, "all the planned action of all animals has never succeeded in impressing the stamp of their will upon the earth. That was left for man" (Marx&Engels 1975, pp. 459-60, in Foster 2000, p. 235). There is tension in Engels's late thought between Darwinian naturalism and a sentiment for human exceptionalism. On the one hand, the *homo sapiens* are thoroughly natural creatures. Engels notes that "at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature – but that we, with flesh, blood, and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst." On the other, there is a sense in which we seem to unabashedly transcend it, for we "have the advantage of all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly" (Marx and Engels 1975, pp. 460-1, in Foster 2000, p. 236). In fact, such was the belief in the human potential to manipulate nature that Marx saw in it "man's inorganic body" (Marx and Engels 1975, vol. 3).

In his 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Marx draws up an essential division between humanity and the rest of the natural world, inherited from Enlightenment thinking. Correspondingly, human being itself is cut up into an autonomous human component and a disposable animal side. The ecological flaw in Marx's thinking can be traced not to his materialist method, but to the way he applies it in his philosophical anthropology. As Ted Benton writes in his analysis of the *Manuscripts*:

those powers, activities, needs, functions (etc.) which fall on the "animal" side of the division are (...) profaned as, perhaps, rather shameful residual features. Their continued, uncomfortably insistent presence, eruptions, and interruptions are demeaning and rob us of the full sense of self-respect to which we feel entitled. A

combined dread and contempt for bodily existence and function is barely disguised in much philosophical dualism (...) It makes for a culture that is guilt-ridden, fearful, and confused over such fundamental features of the shared human and animal condition as sexuality and death. (Benton 2011, p. 113)

Benton is able to discern another possible reading of Marx's views, one of which the latter might have been unaware, and so was unable to bring to a conclusion desirable from the standpoint of his materialist worldview (2011, pp. 114-19). On this alternative reading, the alienation of labor still precludes the development of a uniquely human mode of species-life. This mode, however, is but one among many; our admittedly unique capacities need not give us the obvious pride we tend to take in them. Dorion Sagan finds it astonishing that "our cleverness (...) which after all we possess only as a crutch to make up for our physical weakness, for we would have died without it, should lead us to consider ourselves masters of the universe" (Sagan 2010, p. 2). Still, especially the philosopher – the proudest human being – thinks that he sees "the eyes of the universe telescopically focused from all sides on his thoughts and actions" (ibid.). It wasn't difficult for Enlightenment thinkers, and Marx in their wake, to make this mistake. But, writes Renzo Llorente, "to the extent that a certain speciesism is constitutive of Marx's own thinking, Marx's views are inconsistent with his own commitment to a thoroughgoing materialism, which must acknowledge the kinship, with all its implications, between human life and other forms of animal life" (Llorente 2011, p. 127).

Following in Marx and Engels's footsteps, ecosocialist theory tends to maintain and propagate the twin dualisms of the human–natural, on the one hand, and human–animal on the other. Unbeknownst to the ecosocialists themselves, and to the detriment of their critical sense, these *anthropocentrist assumptions constitute an ideological distortion corresponding to the exploitative material relations prevalent in capitalist society*. In other words, in the first place, humans actually exploit nature and objectify other animals, separating out and alienating themselves. Then, even as they try to curtail domination, they theorize it in ways that enable it to survive in the very theory they formulate. As long as a dualism of society and nature is maintained, explicitly or implicitly, and the animal is treated with contempt, social and environmental problems will effectively be seen as different sets of issues. Only by overcoming these deep-seated divisions can the human be reconciled with itself, others, and the world *as* an animal. In the very least, then, Marxism requires an ontological corrective. Fortunately, this is

where ecosocialism benefits from being grounded in Marx's dialectical, and therefore potentially *self-critical*, method. A shift of Marx and Engels's emphases may salvage their analysis for a non-speciesist ethics and politics that feel at home on earth.

Overcoming Dualism: "Bodiment" as the Ground of Theory

Schooled primarily in analytic moral philosophy, modern animal ethicists have been grappling with the problem of speciesism at least since Richard Ryder coined the term in 1970. Ranging from utilitarian to deontological approaches, the theories they devised are based on ahistorical, scientific, and logical argumentation. For all their merit, they fall short of an appreciation of the specificity and richness of animal life – and the animality of human life in particular – as it manifests itself in our carnal historical and cultural being. In giving precedence to the search for abstract imperatives of ethical behavior, Peter Singer, Tom Regan, Gary Francione, and others expose themselves to Schopenhauerian accusations of pretend and artificial morality.³ Their approach has also been criticized by ecofeminists who point out that the gendered nature of analytic philosophy has much to do with its conclusions (Donovan and Adams 1997, 2007). In any case, analytic moral philosophers clearly value "mental autonomy" over the "body-mechanism"; in order to become critically free, thought needs to be cut loose from the chains of body that is unthinking. Advancing from this Cartesian inner schism to an inevitable position of ontological species-solipsism, they must seek to bridge the gap between humans and other animals by overcoming the "problem of other minds." We have, as it were, humans, on the one hand, and the animal kingdom on the other. The question then becomes one of somehow putting the two together with some sort of conceptual glue. With minds torn away from the bodies that "host" them, and from one another, with humanity ripped from the fabric of nature, no patch-up can make up for the ontological flaw in this approach. Doing ethics within it has resulted in a kind of "morality from on-high," alien to the very reality of which it speaks: to sentience, to pain and suffering, to bodily oppression.

For a consistent naturalism no talk of *opposition* or *dualism* between human and animal, or body and mind, is warranted. That would maintain an untenable premise of there being some non-animal or non-corporeal element within the human being. This is speculatively possible but alien to ordinary experience of the world. Lisa Yun Lee comments on Nietzsche that

"consciousness and intellect are for him a passion or a bodily state like hunger or thirst" (2006, p. 126).⁴ This experiential perspective is supported by scientific research. Based on recent cognitive science, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson conclude that

the mind is embodied, not in any trivial sense (...), but in the deep sense that our conceptual systems and our capacity for thought are shaped by the nature of our brains, our bodies, and our bodily interactions. There is no mind separate from and independent of the body, nor are there thoughts that have an existence independent of bodies and brains (....) The word *mental* picks out those bodily capacities and performances that constitute our awareness and determine our creative and constitutive responses to the situations we encounter (...) mind is part of the very structure and fabric of our interactions with the world. (1999, p. 266)

This implies a rethinking of the concept of "body," which cannot be understood either as an outer shell of an immaterial soul, nor as an information computing machine. Both notions reduce it to an object. In the working notes to the unfinished *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty wrote that starting

from a 'consciousness'-'object' distinction (...) one will never understand (...) how a particular fact of the 'objective' order (...) could entail a particular disturbance of the relation with the world – a massive disturbance that seems to demonstrate that 'consciousness' as a whole is a function of the objective body – It is these problems themselves that must be dismissed by asking: *what is the supposed objective conditioning?* Answer: it is a way of expressing and noting an event of the order of brute or savage being that is ontologically primary. (1968, p. 200, quoted in Carman 2008, pp. 121-122)

Properly understood, consciousness is an outgrowth of organic, animal life, "our *unconscious* bodily immersion in the world" (Carman 2008, p. 122, emphasis original). Subjectivity, our innermost dimension, assumes not the authorship of ideas, but "the shape of a 'hollow' (*creux*) into which the idea arrives." Furthermore, "it is not I who make myself think any more than it is I who make my heart beat (...) and I am not even the author of that *hollow* that forms within me" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, p. 221, quoted in Carbone 2004, XV, emphasis original). Stemming from a bodily, pre-reflective source of intelligence, "ideas and values bring to expression the *encounter* of subjectivity with the world, and they find this expression in a 'thinking' that

operates 'without thinking.'" (Merleau-Ponty 2003, p. 283, quoted in Carbone 2004, XVI). What does that imply for ethics? According to cultural ecologist David Abram

ethics is *not*, first and foremost, a set of rules or principles that we learn from a book or a teacher. It is, first and foremost, a *kind of sense in our bones*. Ethics in this sense is the ability to move in this world without unnecessarily violating the ability of other bodies to move in their own way (....) To the extent that we are living today in a technologically mediated world that cuts us off from our senses, and has us living in a field of abstractions, almost oblivious to our bodily senses, and to the sensuous earth around us, I think it's very hard to be ethical; it's very hard to know what it is to live in right relation with others. (2009, my emphasis)

Therefore, the question of animal ethics requires a recollection of our own carnal existence. Engaging with actual animals of other species in "symphysis" – "a carnal sense of sharing space with others in a nexus of interspecific relationships, a bodied sense of being with others" (Acampora 2006, p. 76) – we discover them to be not a ground on which pain and pleasure can take turns, but beings "condemned to meaning"⁵ sought through the development of their species-specific potentialities. In *Becoming Animal* Abram claims that, however constricted, bodied human experience is always potentially one of contact, of opening up to others, with transspecies implications. It is a "variation, albeit in many cases a very *distant* variation, of what other, non-human bodies may experience in the same locale, at a similar moment of the day or night" (2010, p. 143). Furthermore, as we move from our bodily self-awareness to the intersubjectivity of human culture, we cannot help but encounter the astounding richness of living otherness, of other-than-human subjectivities in their mutual relatedness and co-constitution, all enveloped in "the global transcendence that is 'the flesh of the world'" (1988, pp. 101-20, quoted in Acampora 2006, p. 37).

Excavating the notion of bodiment from beneath "the dominant intellectualist mainstream of Western philosophy," Acampora suggests that a corporeal, empathy-based ethical relationship between an *engaged* human and other animals is established *in the existential field* inhabited by living bodies (2006, p. 119). He places his study under the heading of moral somatology wherein "a posthumanist hermeneutic of somaesthetic sensibility and the lived force of existential attraction (registering as bodily sensitivity and thus encompassing dimensions of our being behind or beneath that of rational rectitude) [are] key factors" (ibid. p. 118).

Although the lifeworlds of various species of animals differ radically, they "share at least one similar existential structure – that of residence" (ibid. p. 119). Virtually all space occupied by humans is space shared with natural others. While co-habitation is always a source of potential conflict over territory and/or access to vital resources, it goes without saying that the chaotic convulsions of capitalist development only make the situation worse. This inter- and intra-species clash cannot be minimized until, for example, current runaway rates of human population growth are neutralized and corrected, and spatial maldistribution of human settlements is realigned with the enveloping ecologies. Refusing humans "control over the terms of their social existence" (Kovel 2007a, p. 9), capitalism makes such restructuring impossible. It cannot be executed through market and price signals, divorced as they are from the subtleties and complexities of local/regional ecosystemic dynamics. But confusion as to why a realignment of ill-balanced human ecology is necessary may well lead to confusion about how to proceed. Drawing upon Merleau-Ponty's thought in particular, Acampora argues for "a phenomenology of body because somaticity is what opens us out into our environment – and that environmental opening is what provides the shared space of convivial worldhood across speciated horizons" (2006, p. 120). With a back-to-the-body *Gestalt* switch, nature is revived as the core of human activity and receptivity; we find ourselves part of *le chair du monde*, Merleau-Ponty's flesh of the world.

Another existential dimension common to all animals is *sensitivity in ceaseless becoming*. Corporeity constitutes for us "the plight of being a soft body in a world of hard reality" (Watts 1970, p. 99), exposing us to endless permutations of suffering. Though we can never know either ourselves or the world completely, to the world we are entirely transparent and wholly permeable. No part of ourselves remains unchanged or untouched. The threat of suffering invokes both fear of the other and concern for her well-being. Acampora agrees with Edith Wyschogrod that "vulnerability constitutes a proscriptive 'corporal plea' against violence" and is "capable of engendering a prescriptive impetus towards 'meliorative action'" (2006, p. 80, quoting from Wyschogrod 2003, p. 163). A practical realization of such interanimal compassion, built into an "ethos sculpted somatically by symphyical encounters, would constitute a character or culture morally sensitive to the existential element of live bodiment as such – including its susceptibilities to damage, disease, and decay" (2006, p. 130).

Overcoming experientially the untenable conceptual schisms of nature vs. culture, history vs. climate, or time vs. place helps to "refire latent yet abiding feelings of biophilia"⁶ (ibid. p. 133). This can take place at the most basic level of perception, which is "a sort of silent conversation that I carry on with things, a continuous dialogue that unfolds far below my verbal awareness – and often, even, *independent* of my verbal awareness" (Abram 1996, p. 52, his emphasis). The "Self," it becomes clear, is the body. Nietzsche insists that "the awakened one, the knowing one says: Body I am completely and nothing else, and soul is only a word for something in the body" (Nietzsche 2003, p. 24). It is as carnal subjects that we inhabit, or *body*, our world, "each of us experiencing it from our own angle, and with our own specific capabilities, yet nonetheless all participants in the round life of the earth, and hence subject to the same large-scale flows, rhythms, and tensions that move across that wider life" (Abram 2010, p. 143). An acknowledgement of the actuality of this co-habitation is possible only when human corporeity "blossoms into the full-fledged redemption – not rejection – of animal *physis*" (Acampora 2006, p. 65).

The Body, Capitalism, and Socialist Possibility

Experiential immersion in material life among other natural creatures is a deeply necessary basis for ecosocialism; it promises to fill in the gaps left by narrowly anthropocentrist approaches to ecology within socialist theory. Unanchored in animal being, ecosocialism must remain, at most, superficially ecological. On the other hand, ecophenomenology will be politically naive and doomed to fail as a social movement without the sobering ecosocialist critique of capitalism as the vehicle of modernity. Abram, for instance, fails to give proper due to the hard economic and political factors underpinning the current cultural and technological order. He submits that some "necessary aspect of life has been dangerously overlooked (...) in the rush toward a common world" (1996, p. 270). True, but – like many other greens – he generally overlooks capitalism as one *ultimately unnecessary* yet binding historical force animating much of the natural and social devastation he bemoans.⁷ As the dominant *modus operandi* of contemporary oppression, capitalism continues to haunt defenseless bodies across the globe. Let us look briefly at how this happens with respect to the repression of sensuous, animal, and social life.

One of the basic ways the hold of capital over life strengthens is through the transformation of every conceivable natural object into a commodity. This is emblematic of the triumph in society of exchange value over use value and intrinsic value.⁸ Quality is reduced to quantity, specificity of substance and form to universality of exchange, individuality to mass anonymity, and non-monetary considerations of worth are marginalized in favor of profit-making. *Everything* is standardized. Under such conditions, animal nature, by definition qualitatively rich, is tamed, controlled and/or eradicated on an unprecedented scale. Manipulation assumes a microbiological dimension through a technocapitalist intrusion into the very biological fabric of life (Cooper 2008). Through genetic manipulation, recombination, and hybridization the animal body becomes the latest site of capital's operation. Animality becomes raw material gobbled up by the technocapitalist apparatus, the ground zero of exploitation.

At the same time, capital accumulation intensifies through cost externalizing, i.e. their transfer away from the immediate site of economic activity to the enveloping ecosystems, including human-social systems. In concrete terms, this process wreaks havoc on the lives of countless sentient beings. It is accompanied by capital's inherent expansionism through which the capitalist mode of operation is exported wherever it can get a foothold. If somewhere that is not possible, a mix of economic buy-off, political repression, and technological prowess is applied to create conditions adequate for exploitation. So, accumulation proceeds by geographic dislocation and invasion into the habitats and lifeworlds of animals (including humans). A modest estimation would have it that millions worldwide are exterminated or thrown out as land is developed for profitable investment. The earth upon which life itself depends is remade wholesale. The many ways in which this is done include large infrastructural development, mechanized, corporate agriculture, and unrestrained urbanization – elimination not only of the so-called wilderness, but of the country as well. Likewise, the oceans become areas of pillage for those who can afford to invest in the mass exploitation of marine life. These massive shifts leave in their wake the greatest species die-off in over 60 million years as one of the hallmarks of our time (EDI 2013). In turn, animals of other species are forcibly reproduced for the express purpose of being subjected to endless, routine extermination by the billions in slaughterhouses, laboratories, fish farms, and other sites around the world. Crucially, it is capital that provides the necessary economic incentive; it turns animal captivity, mutilation, and killing into a host of lucrative, expanding businesses.

All of this is difficult to comprehend on account of two more of capital's anti-ecological characteristics. First of all, late, technologically-infused capitalism has the propensity for turning daily life into spectacle by subordinating it to a series of abstractions: the image, the symbol, and most recently the brand. This goes hand in hand with the *privileging of the sense of sight* and, in effect, of the experience of distance and separateness over physical proximity. With destructive consequences to animal life and ecological stability, commodity qua commodity severs its ties with the sensuous world and, at the same time, *replaces it* for us.⁹ In this setting, it is no wonder, for instance, that endless battles are fought over the reality of industry-induced climate change, even though it can be felt sensorially (Samuel 2009).¹⁰ The fact that civilized human society now reproduces itself in increasing distrust of the senses allows the capitalist spectacle to further displace our attention from the sensuous to the hyperreal. The result is an ongoing erasure of concrete materiality as a horizon of experience.

Second, capital advances through breaking down integral wholes; in this context, it introduces an ever more complex division of labor, which amounts to increasing social and perceptual fragmentation. Embedded in huge, impersonal structures, individuals become less and less cognizant of the consequences of their productive activity, which results in estrangement from the process and products of their labor. A related effect is that the body comes to mirror the machine in the latter's narrow, specialized orientation. Michael Steinberg writes that "our transformation" into atomized, disembodied selves "is exactly what is called for in today's human order; it both underpins and is maintained by the same structures of production that have remade the world in the image of the market" (2005, p. 143). Finding ways to adapt to this new life setting, "we are mutating into the species best fitted to the capitalist world" (*ibid.*). Antonio Gramsci wrote in his *Prison Notebooks* of industrialism – the most tangible expression of capitalist modernity – that it "has always been a continuing struggle against the element of 'animality' in man" (1992, p. 298). Furthermore, as Steinberg is right to emphasize, "the experience of living as an isolated mind is the phenomenal form of capitalism, and capitalism is all the more powerful in that its ideology exists as a form of experience instead of as a body of maxims and principles that can be refuted or ignored" (2005, p. 33). Since capitalist development engenders "standardization and reification (...) progress actually constitutes a form of regression" and deals death to subjectivity (Bronner 2011, p. 5). Atomization of the individual self, commodification and oppression of animality, and capitalism are internally related, constituting

an order of "regimented experience," to borrow Adorno's term. Under capitalism, then, animal being is inherently imperiled.

We are facing a massive crisis and, as Pepper argues, "it is at times like these that the left and the greens anticipate that they will make their mark most effectively. Yet this has not happened" (1993, p. 2). After all, as Sartre said, "catastrophes have no lessons, unless they are the culmination of a praxis" (2008, p. 35). As we lock ourselves away in inhospitable, barely habitable cities, and other animals in cages, behind bars, we are habituated towards exploitative behavior. In continued denial of our animality, social consciousness is becoming increasingly reified by attunement of human activity *not to natural rhythms, including bodily needs, but to the requirements of technocratic capitalism*. As the animate basis of capital accumulation and social reproduction, the living body is the fundamental site of oppression, the *first* victim of capitalist colonization and instrumentalization. Therefore it has the unfortunate privileged access to firsthand experience of domination, and might be construed as the basic unit of resistance to it. If indignation, passion, and longing for redemption are to be aroused, they must be sought in the body.

But bodily agency is easily lost in large-scale political battles. In struggling for ecological renewal under capitalism, one is always fighting against a stronger enemy. Moreover, the closer one comes to overthrowing such a resilient socio-historical formation, the more resistance is encountered. We should therefore seek out paradigms that offer practical insight into the possibilities for achieving reasonable and radical social transformation. In those terms, socialism is one of the few oppositional movements that have proven capable of acting forcefully, effectively, and with long-term prospects. As such, it has been severely criticized for all of its shortcomings, to a degree which was spared revolutionaries under other banners. Strong criticism of "actually existing socialism," namely that it subscribed to the modern outlook, focusing an overwhelming proportion of productive capacities on accelerated industrialization, was conducted by ecosocialists themselves. The underlying goal of traditional state-socialism to catch up with the capitalist West was expressed early on by Lenin, when he equated socialism with "Soviet power plus electrification" (1970). The body and the earth were thwarted by traditional-socialist centralized policies. But they are thwarted, too, through disregard for ethical and ecological limits exercised almost universally today by the dominant managerial approach to politics and scientific management of life in general.

Administrators act through abstract, symbolic systems that later on, through a kind of technoscientific mystery play, influence the world and everyone in it in ways that to the living body seem magical. This mode of social and natural life is alienating to the administrator herself; it disconnects her from the substance and consequences of her actions, making fellow-feeling inapplicable and reducing thinking to instrumental rationality. More importantly, scientific management turns those on the receiving end of administrative procedures, decrees, and violence into objects, making the world incomprehensible to them, and engendering their passivity. Managerial politics insists on exercising authority through processes alien to the life of the subject's senses, processes that originate in a disconnection between body and place. With the atrophying of direct democracy, participation, communal self-organization, and the significance of locality, management becomes a regime of occupation: at times beneficent, but always in some way crippling. It may organize life to ease its immediate burdens, but at the same time it sets its terms from above, with decisions undertaken at a distance. Climate change, social disarray, and murderous speciesist exploitation become a series of figures in a report, which brings to mind Stalin's epigram: "a single death is a tragedy; a million deaths is a statistic." All of this is made possible and perpetuated by abstraction and separation from the somatic. As Sajay Samuel explains:

if it is through our senses that we apprehend the world, the senses are also the way we are tethered to what is given. And we cannot find our nature, unless we acknowledge our naturalness, which is shared with the world around us. So, unless we remain tied to the world, our fingers, as it were, plunged into the soil, we will forever mistake our nature (...) and if I speak of natural thresholds as limits, this tethering is central. (2009)

The macro-scale effects correspond to the experience of the simplest of daily activities and show a loss of body-based common sense:

It is precisely because we've been uprooted and [are] freely floating, for the most part, that we don't grasp anymore, in a carnal, sensible way, the difference between walking and cycling, and being FedExed. When you get into a car, you are made into a FedEx package just as I am. That we think both of these are modes of transportation is an index (...) of how far we have come untethered, how uncommonsensical we have become (ibid.)

Somatic vitality and sensitivity are central, then, to a recognition of ethical, ecological, and political limits and possibilities. They are therefore crucial to a politics of resistance. It is impossible to offer blueprints for it. The question is, rather, "will living, feeling bodies be able to break through the alienation imposed by the megastructures of the dominant socioeconomic and technological order?" The question of technology in its own right, as opposed to its treatment as a secondary and derivative feature of social relations, has been relatively neglected in most Marxist critique. The latter, remarks Russell Jacoby, has been paralyzed by the Marxists' "basic rapport with industrial life....The Marxists would inherit the cities and the mass newspapers; only the signs and the headlines would be changed. Rockefeller Plaza would become Leninplatz" (1981, p. 31). Beside the neglect of the vicissitudes of bodily life, this omission has been the Achilles' heel of much of Marxism, a space largely taken up by conservative critics such as Nietzsche, Spengler, or Jacques Ellul (*ibid.*). In a coherent analysis of both social relations and the strictly material conditions of life, the question of technology ought to figure far more prominently. It seems appropriate, then, to conclude by looking at parallels in the technical nature of social organization existing under capitalism and proposed for ecosocialism, in order to see how the question of technology could complicate the possibility of a body-centered ecosocialist future.

Since technology is essentially a means of transgressing limits, and limits are crucial to a sane way of life, ought ecosocialism to be anti-technological? After all, even socially controlled technology takes a toll on the contents of perceptual life; it shifts the horizon of experience and alters the potential for recognition of limits. But ecosocialists like Kovel have expressed a readiness to embrace "appropriate technology," which at least in some instances turns out to be advanced technoscience. In fact, he "would expect considerable areas of technological overlapping between capitalist and ecocentric production" (2007a, p. 237). One would, Kovel elaborates, "use sophisticated medical imaging in each case, and this one application implies the whole edifice of informational and electronic science" (*ibid.*). His claim that "it makes a world of a difference if a technology is incorporated into medical profiteering, or used to care for the organismic aspect of a human ecosystem" is an exaggeration. Regardless of social intention, the *structure* of technology directs "its interaction with the world, the way it will be used, the kind of people who use it, and to what ends" (Mander 1978, p. 45). The instance Kovel mentions would possibly engender the sort of social complexity and fragmentation we now witness all around us

in the capitalist world-system, one that necessitates the emergence of managerial hierarchies. Again, then, should ecosocialism reject technology wholesale? Should it opt for primitivism?

At least some inspiration can be drawn from what Marshall Sahlins has called "the original affluent society" (1972), a society emerging out of indigenous, pre-agricultural, and technologically parsimonious cultures with their perceptual attunement to nature and ecocentric mode of production. However, it bears emphasizing that, at least theoretically, technology could be welcome in a sane ecosocialism insofar as it promoted somatic relationality, consonantly with the words of Eden Phillpotts' *A Shadow Passes*: "the universe is full of magical things, patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper" (1918, p. 19). With this in mind, technologies would be evaluated critically and with a healthy dose of skepticism, as opposed to the techno-optimist spirit of traditional socialism. But how does a concrete human animal evaluate advanced technology? At the present level of abstraction and complexity in the division of labor, this is critically impossible, be it under capitalism or state-socialism. Would it be any different under conditions of freely associated labor that ecosocialists desire? What form would freely associated labor take in a technologically advanced system, and what role could the body play in identifying significant ethical, political, and ecological limits? Pepper realistically points out the "common tendency on the left to underestimate the complexity of advanced economics. That complexity results from extreme specialization, fragmentation, interdependence and internationalization. There are now *too many* producers/consumers to be able to reconcile, in advance, supply with demand – even given the most advanced computer technology" (1993, p. 229, emphasis original). What active role would the body have to play in such a scheme? Its agency could well be largely illusory, especially given that the most advanced computer technology is often also strongly alienating – transporting us from sensuous reality to virtuality. With the body placed at the core of ethics and politics, a fruitful evaluation of technology would require its adjustment to a level comprehensible to the body in terms of complexity, scope, and size. This would require a concurrent overcoming of the constraints of scientific management and managerial politics, which rely, as it were, on the same alienating algorithms. It is only then that the body could fully participate in its world, and limits could be recognized and respected. *There is no ecocentric production and no ecological consciousness without a form of life practically grounded in the body.*

The big question is whether, eschewing authoritarian modes of organization, an emergent ecosocialist movement can push for a sane society, one consonant with human-natural rhythms. Could it become body-centric, that is, grounded in the dialectic of body and world? Could it break with a long-standing tradition of animal repression inscribed deep in the heart of modernity and civilization? Could it designate a praxis of revalorized subjectivity¹ and receptivity to the lives of flesh-and-blood beings of the world? Could it constitute a socialist vision that, albeit without guarantees, would be suited for fallible human animals? Finally, could it assume a scale adequate not to an alienating mediation of abstract minds and systems, but to an enhanced lived immediacy and somatic presence? It is impossible to answer any of these questions at this point. However, it is clear that *only* under these conditions, having transformed itself from within, could ecosocialism acknowledge the alienated human as part of a broader community of earthlings interwoven in the fabric of material life.

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Notes

¹ By crisis I do not mean merely a difficult situation in which it will be possible to overcome through a gradual adaptation of the system to newfound conditions. I adopt Immanuel Wallerstein's definition of systemic crisis to denote "those difficulties that cannot be resolved within the framework of the system, but instead can be overcome only by going outside of and beyond the historical system of which the difficulties are a part" (2004, p. 76).

² I use Ralph R. Acampora's term "bodiment" instead of the more common "embodiment" (2006, p. 38). The latter implicitly creates a rift between body and being, an unwarranted dualism that I wish to avoid. I similarly employ "bodied" instead of "embodied," as well as other terms, which, though perhaps unusual, help bring home my point.

³ On page 215 of *On the Basis of Morality* (1915), Schopenhauer discusses a hypothetical situation where two men abstain from killing a third and give reasons for it. He suggests it is

untenable to regard as moral the action of the one who justifies his abstention as a Kantian would, i.e., "I reflected that the principle I was going to apply in this case would not be adapted to provide a rule universally valid for all possible rational beings." The tenor of the statement reeks of artificiality typical of *ex post facto* deliberation. This is not, Schopenhauer holds, where ethical action originates, nor how it actually plays out. He points to compassion as the sole motivator of truly moral comportment.

⁴ For Nietzsche's discussion of the subject, see *The Dawn* (1967, p. 276).

⁵ This phrase was originally used by Merleau-Ponty to play off of Sartre's claim that humans are "condemned to freedom" (Merleau-Ponty 1945, XXII). In my essay, the transspecies implications of the statement are acknowledged; a level of felt meaning is granted other animals beneath and beyond their respective capacity for conceptual thinking, etc. According to Acampora, it is doubtful whether Merleau-Ponty himself would concur with this interpretation, at least in the period before he started working on *The Visible and the Invisible*.

⁶ The term biophilia was employed by Erich Fromm to designate love of what is alive, vital, dynamic, flourishing, uncontrollable (Fromm 2008 [1967], p. 69) – what I am tempted to identify in this context with animality. Posed as its opposite, necrophilia referred to an attraction to that which is dead, inert, mechanical, predictable, and controlled. On this broad account, fear of body and animality may in fact have some propinquity with necrophiliac tendencies. Although Fromm excluded specific concerns for the well-being of other animals from his concept of biophilia, we have no reason to do so. Fromm was constrained by his exclusivist, rationalist humanism, and built the foundations of his philosophy around it. This made him unable to appreciate what were perhaps the most progressive aspects of his outlook. Despite his lumping together of "fanatical vegetarians" with "fanatical antiabortionists" as "fanatics of 'virtue'" who repress their own murderous and "sinful" impulses, there seems to be good evidence that fellow-feeling for other animals is quite a natural predisposition. It is this propensity for intimacy with other bodied beings that is suppressed in the human psyche, its release liberating rather than repressive. In any case, biophilia seems to be pertinent to our concern as a vehicle for animal liberation.

⁷ Within the general structure of critique that Abram executes in his work, at at least one juncture he comes close to acknowledging capitalism *per se*, as opposed to modernity in general, as both

a source and manifestation of the problem. He argues for the necessity of stepping beyond "commercial assumptions that are broadly taken for granted today" in trying to appreciate the ways of living of indigenous peoples (Abram 2010, p. 267). As an example of just such an assumption, he points to "the basic equation of *land* with *property* – with a commodity that can be bought, sold, or owned" (ibid.). The dominance of the commodity form, as Lukács persuasively argued in *History and Class Consciousness*, is the hallmark of capitalism. It is not so much commercial activity, or trade, that is the problem, but the colonization of society's innermost dimensions by the commodity form itself.

⁸ "Intrinsic value" is the third category of value Kovel distinguishes, in addition to the dichotomy of use-exchange value common to socialist analyses of capitalism. "In terms of reality-as nature – he says – intrinsic value is a kind of ablation of our productive power; that is, we intrinsically value the nature that we have done nothing to, that will always stand and beckon, that is our primordium and cosmos" (2007, p. 212). The thing to note here is that on this account intrinsic value retains a *relational character*. That is to say, it does not inhere in the object, nor is it conferred on the object arbitrarily by an external subject. Instead, it originates in the field of relation between them; better still, it manifests "from beneath" both. If correct, this interpretation saves the notion of intrinsic value from skeptics who assert that only subjects can confer value, thus designating intrinsic value a fallacious proposition.

⁹ According to Guy Debord, "the perceptible world is replaced by a set of images that are superior to that world yet at the same time impose themselves as *eminently* perceptible (....) The world the spectacle holds to view is at once *here* and *elsewhere*; it is the world ruling over all lived experience." See G. Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*. Trans. D. Nicholson-Smith, New York: Zone Books 1994, p. 26.

¹⁰ Of the politics of climate change, Sajay Samuel says, "Let us ask, what is the purpose in engaging in these climate change models? And mind you, I have no doubt, and I want to underscore this fact, that the earth has been despoiled through industrialization. All I have to do is to walk in my home in India, for example, and take breath of the air, what passes for air. It's manifest, it's common sense..." Questions of climate change are posed as technical, practical questions and answered scientifically because what is sought is not a sane form of living, but the maximum possible threshold of exploitation.

¹¹ See chapters 8 through 10 of James Miller's *History and Human Existence* for a discussion of the contribution of Sartre's and Merleau-Ponty's existentialist phenomenology to a revaluation of (human) subjectivity in Marxism.

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“The Paragon of Animals”? Animal Morality and Wroblewski’s Subversion of Human Exceptionalism in *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*

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Abstract

Are animals moral beings? Can they feel empathy? In this interdisciplinary article, I focus on how David Wroblewski’s novel *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* subverts the ideology of human exceptionalism by loosely utilizing the *Hamlet* plot to portray dog characters as morally superior to humans. Then I explore studies in neuroscience on animal empathy to show these studies seem to support Wroblewski’s portrayal of dogs as empathetic and moral. In addition, I discuss what philosopher Mark Rowlands calls the “Machiavellian intelligence hypothesis.” Since intellect is not the same as morality and humans and apes often use their superior intellect to deceive and scheme, Rowlands believes wolves and dogs may in fact be morally superior to humans; this argument supports Wroblewski’s subversion of human exceptionalism. Next, I compare Wroblewski’s novel to Jack London’s *The Call of the Wild* to show how each novel reflects the evolutionary biology of its time. In London’s day the notion of individualism and “survival of the fittest” dominated evolutionary biology, but today’s evolution theory also focuses on the importance of altruism, as Wroblewski’s novel demonstrates.

Keywords: animal studies, human exceptionalism, David Wroblewski, empathy, evolutionary biology, Jack London

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Introduction

At the beginning of the 20th century, when Jack London wrote *The Call of the Wild* (1903), Herbert Spencer's interpretations of Darwin's evolutionary theory, which infused Darwin's ideas of natural selection and common descent with notions of individualism and eugenics, dominated the cultural environment. Human exceptionalism reigned; humans were perceived as the most highly evolved species, both intellectually and morally superior to all other animals. Non-human animals were thought to lack souls, and thus feelings such as empathy. As writer Marc Bekoff states, "[W]riters and naturalists [such as London] who gave animals 'personalities' were vilified as 'nature fakers'" (2007, p. 135). Anthropomorphization was considered unscientific, and the notion that animals might be capable of morality was unthinkable. More than a century later, however, when David Wroblewski wrote *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* (2008), the cultural milieu had changed. We are coming to realize that animals are quite capable of emotions like empathy and moral behavior (Bekoff 2007, xviii). Studies in neuroscience suggest that animals feel empathy for one another, and observations by animal ethologists also show that animals possess rich and complex emotional lives, including morality. Additionally, evolutionary biology no longer focuses exclusively on survival based on individual selection, but also the importance of altruism and how it affects the evolution of groups. Both group and individual selection are accepted as major factors contributing to evolution (Pigliucci 2009, p. 221). Ecology and evolutionary biology have become integrated (p. 223), so that it is now understood that species co-evolve with one another and that environment plays a significant role in species' evolution. Wroblewski's novel reflects all of these cultural changes. Like *The Call of the Wild*, it personifies its dog characters while also reflecting the evolutionary and philosophical ideas of its time.

In addition to its London influences, *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* loosely recapitulates the plot in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In order to raise questions about human exceptionalism, the novel replaces the morally redeeming characters in *Hamlet*, such as Ophelia, with dogs. Wroblewski's novel utilizes parallels with *Hamlet* to depict a world in which animals can be morally superior to humans, in order to subvert the ideology of human exceptionalism; it also uses comparisons with *The Call of the Wild* to promote altruism over selfishness.

Dogs with a Conscience

The Story of Edgar Sawtelle repeatedly depicts dogs as morally superior to humans. Two human characters directly state that dogs are morally better than people. Mr. Benson, who drives all the way from Texas to the Sawtelle's Wisconsin farm to buy their dogs, complains to Trudy and Dr. Papineau about how the Bible depicts dogs: "In the Bible there's hardly no mention of dogs," says Benson. "What there is makes them out like vermin" (Wroblewski 2008, p. 316). He goes on to quote from the Bible: "'Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before the swine'—that's Matthew. It's always bothered me. I'm a heathen nowadays, though. People in my congregation fall faint if I walk in on a Sunday. But a lot of them aren't as holy as a good dog" (p. 317). Benson argues that dogs are morally superior to humans. Also, in a letter that Edgar finds from Charles Adwin to Edgar's grandfather regarding Mr. Sawtelle's dog breeding project, Mr. Adwin writes, "As a boy I had a Setter named Lucky that was the moral superior of any man I've known, myself included" (p. 266). Benson and Adwin could very well be the voice of the implied author; the novel is full of instances of animal virtue and human wickedness.

Several events in the novel illustrate the moral superiority of dogs. For example, the dogs never murder anyone in cold blood, human or dog, the way Claude plots successfully to murder his own brother in order to usurp his dog farm and his wife. Also, When Gar's ghost appears to Edgar in the form of displaced raindrops, and Edgar doubts his vision, the ghost commands him to "release a dog" (p. 236) in order to prove that he's real. The dog Essay recognizes Gar, proving to Edgar the veracity of his vision. The dog is more empathetic with the spirit world than Edgar. In another example, the dog Almondine prevents Edgar from murdering Claude. When he picks up a hammer with the intention of returning to the house to murder Claude, Almondine stands in the workshop doorway as if to block him: "The sight of her pulled him up short" (p. 251). Later, he regretfully remembers that time:

He should have acted that morning, so long ago, the moment he'd understood what Claude had done. The hammer had been in his hand. Instead he'd faltered and doubted, and the flame in him had choked it to embers. But one breath of pure air

had drawn it up again. That had been Almondine. None of it was her fault, he knew.

And yet he couldn't forgive her. (p. 311)

Because this section is from Edgar's point of view and not Almondine's, it is not clear whether she purposefully blocks him, or whether he just thinks she is acting intentionally. Perhaps he is projecting onto her his anger toward himself, toward his own uncertainty about how and whether to murder Claude in revenge. However, whether intentional or not, Almondine appears to be acting as Edgar's conscience by stopping him short from his murderous intent. This act seems to prove that she is as "holy" as Benson says good dogs are. The passage also shows Edgar's blindness to the righteousness of her behavior; he can't forgive her for it, even though it resulted in the prevention of murder.

The most significant illustration of Almondine's moral superiority, however, comes from a passage told from her perspective. While Edgar has exiled himself to the wilderness, she is alone, pining for him. "They'd shaped each other under the heat of some more brilliant sun," she reminisces, "whose light had quietly passed from the world" (p. 462). The dog and the boy have learned from each other. Their relationship was symbiotic, and even though Edgar has been cruel to her, she still loves him and forgives him. By giving her a point of view, and very nearly a voice, the author bestows selfhood onto her. She is not an object, a "dumb brute," but an individual with conscious thought and feelings. She walks out into the road to see if he has returned, but he hasn't, so she decides to "[ask] the truck her question.... [Ask] if it had seen her boy. Her essence. Her soul" (p. 463). Here, Wroblewski asserts that, contrary to Descartes' belief that animals lack souls (Lopez 1978, p. 147), dogs indeed have souls. More importantly, he demonstrates that Almondine's love is spiritual and unconditional. Even though Edgar betrayed her, she still thinks of him as her "soul." She even dies while searching for him as if martyring herself for him. Wroblewski's portrayal of Almondine demonstrates the powerful ability of a dog to love and forgive.

Almondine's unconditional love for Edgar and the martyr-like manner of her death parallel her with Ophelia in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Despite Hamlet's cruelty to her, Ophelia remains true to him. She loses her wits and perishes, perhaps because one who is so honest and true is unable to maintain sanity and live in such an immoral world. Like Ophelia, Almondine cannot live in a world where humans are cruel to each other and to her. Ophelia is one of the

most morally redeeming characters in *Hamlet*; likewise, Almondine remains perhaps the most morally superior character in *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*.

In addition to the Ophelia/ Almondine parallel, Wroblewski substitutes dogs for the only other two morally redeeming *Hamlet* characters. Fortinbras, the Norwegian prince who remains untainted by the immoral acts of Elsinore, has a dog parallel in Wroblewski's book of *Forte*, the stray dog who wanders the periphery of the story until Essay leads the other dogs into the wild to join him. Also, the dog Essay replaces Horatio, Hamlet's true friend. Similarly, Essay keeps Edgar company when he flees to the wilderness in self-imposed exile. As Hamlet lies dying, he asks Horatio to "report me and my cause aright/ To the unsatisfied.... To tell my story" (Shakespeare 1958, p. 145). After his death, Horatio proceeds to tell Fortinbras what has transpired. Likewise, in Wroblewski's novel, after the human characters have either murdered one another or died by their own folly, Essay leads the surviving dogs into the wild to join Forte: "[S]he turned and made her choice and began to cross" (Wroblewski 2008, p. 562). Unlike Horatio, Essay cannot tell Edgar's story to humans. But perhaps she will communicate it to Forte, as we are left to infer. Thus, in the novel, the only three morally redeeming characters in *Hamlet* have dog parallels.

Why does Wroblewski use this canine twist on the *Hamlet* cast in his effort to critique human exceptionalism? Most likely the idea stemmed from what Hamlet says when he becomes disillusioned with humanity. Knowing that his uncle murdered his father, and that his mother was complicit, Hamlet exclaims:

What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals! And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? (p. 59)

Hamlet is contrasting what he sees all around him with the assumption that humans are the "paragon of animals." He is painfully aware that reality does not reflect the ideal.

Throughout Western history, people have been taught that we are morally superior to animals. The Bible tells us that we are made in God's image, while animals exist just to serve us. The King James version of the Bible states, "And God said unto them [Adam and Eve], Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth"

(Genesis. 1:28). Although some more recent translations use “rule over,” “reign over,” or “be masters over” in place of “have dominion,” (“Bible Suite” 2013) the idea is the same: God gave humans power and authority over non-human animals. In addition, the philosopher Rene Descartes, who lived around the same time as Shakespeare, wrote that “not only were animals put on earth for man’s use but they were distinctly lowborn; *they were without souls* and therefore man incurred no moral guilt in killing them” (Lopez 1978, p. 147, italics mine). Humans have souls; animals do not. God made humans, and only humans, in God’s image, and other animals exist to serve us; thus humans are morally superior to other animals. This is the ideology of human exceptionalism.

Yet *Hamlet*, like *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*, depicts human immorality and cruelty. Hamlet’s disillusionment with the human race is a critique of human exceptionalism: after realizing that his uncle has murdered his own brother, he is beginning to sincerely doubt that humans are the “paragon of animals.” He perceives them now as “this quintessence of dust.” Indeed, his own cruelty toward Ophelia indicates that he too is not without moral failing. He is well aware of this when he tells Ophelia to go to a nunnery: “Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners....I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me....What should such fellows as I do, crawling between earth and heaven?” (p. 65). Disgusted with humanity and himself, he does not want to perpetuate the human race; he does not want to be a “breeder of sinners.” Wroblewski takes Hamlet’s critique on human exceptionalism further, however. The novel seems to assert that dogs, not humans, are the “paragon of animals.”

Is Wroblewski simply anthropomorphizing dogs by projecting positive “human” moral characteristics onto them, or is it possible that dogs or other non-human animals may be morally superior, or at least morally equal, to humans? The philosopher Immanuel Kant certainly did not think so. Michael Pollan writes, “As Kant pointed out, the human being is the only moral animal, the only one even capable of entertaining a concept of ‘rights’” (2002). Humans have superior intelligence, but does this automatically make us morally better than other animals? What is morality and where does it come from? The field of neuroscience provides some interesting insight into animal empathy and morality.

Animal Morality and Neuroscience

Morality depends upon the ability of one individual to feel empathy with other individuals. In a chapter in *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy* titled “Empathy, Morality, and Social Convention,” Blair and Blair (2009) write that there is a complex association between empathy and morality. “Specifically,” they write, “the empathetic response to fearful and sad expressions is associated with the development of proscriptions against moral transgressions” (p. 148). Empathy, then, makes morality possible—but what exactly is empathy? Many different definitions of the term “empathy” exist (Custance and Mayer 2012, pp. 851-2). Pfeifer and Dapretto (2009) describe it as “shared affect between self and other” (p. 184). Decety and Jackson (2004) define it as “the naturally occurring subjective experience of similarity between the feelings expressed by self and others without losing (sic) sight of whose feelings belong to whom” (qtd. in Custance and Mayer 2012, p. 852). Basically, then, empathy might be thought of as the ability to feel the emotions of another individual. Without the ability to empathize, an individual would not be able to feel the emotions another being is experiencing. An individual lacking this ability would likely not feel guilty about hurting another individual, and so would lack a moral nature. But what part of the brain makes empathy possible, the more complex, specifically human neocortex or some other structure that we share with other species?

By studying the brains of psychopaths, people who demonstrate antisocial behavior and lack feelings of guilt (Blair 2003, p. 5), scientists have gained insight into where empathy originates in the brain. In “Neurobiological basis of psychopathy,” Blair writes, “The amygdala...is...involved in the response to fearful and sad facial expressions.... [T]he amygdala is thus involved in all the processes that, when impaired, give rise to the functional impairments shown by individuals with psychopathy. It is therefore suggested that amygdala dysfunction is one of the core neural systems implicated in the pathology of psychopathy” (p. 5). While the brain is incredibly complex and no brain structure works in isolation, Blair’s article strongly suggests that dysfunction of the “primitive” amygdala, not of the evolutionarily advanced neocortex, is one of the primary causes of psychopathy. All mammals, including humans, and even reptiles and amphibians possess an amygdala, which is a component of the limbic system (Isaacson 1982, pp. 2-3). Elsewhere, Blair and Blair argue that “the amygdala plays a role in morality” by enabling a person to associate violence against another person with the victim’s

frightened or sad reaction. They go on to write, “[T]he integrated response of the amygdala and the orbital frontal cortex is the neural basis of the individual’s ‘moral intuition’” (2009, p. 144). Thus, if a child hits another child and the victim begins to cry, the perpetrator associates the victim’s sadness with moral transgression and intuitively that it is wrong to hit people. While the authors concede that the amygdala is not the only brain structure responsible for empathy, they maintain that it is essential for the ability to empathize and possess a “moral intuition.” This leads one to wonder whether non-human species with an amygdala, such as dogs and rats, also might be capable of empathy. If neuroscience can show animals to be capable of empathy, this scientifically would help support Wroblewski’s moral depiction of dogs.

Several experiments seem to strongly support the idea that animals feel empathy. Most of these have been performed on rats and mice. Ironically, some of these experiments have involved shocking the rats’ feet to cause them pain, in order to determine whether a rat who had not experienced the shock could empathize with the shocked rat. The researchers of one such experiment (Knapska et al. 2006) concluded that “there is, indeed, a transfer of emotional state between subjects.... Furthermore, we show that the [rats who weren’t shocked] have most of their amygdala activated...to the same level as the [rats who were shocked], reflecting their specific behavioral treatment and, in the case of the central amygdala, to even higher levels” (p. 3859). The observer rat had not experienced pain. Yet, when reunited with the suffering rat, his or her own amygdala was activated as well. Although the article did not mention the word “empathy,” the rat who had not experienced pain reacted to the shocked rat’s pain, which might suggest that rats are capable of empathy. More recently, a similar experiment (Atsak et al. 2011) on “vicarious freezing” in rats found that rats who had previously experienced a painful shock would freeze up when reunited with a rat who had just been given the same kind of shock (p. 6). According to the authors of this last experiment, several other studies on rats and mice also “suggest that rodents are sensitive to what happens to other rodents” (p. 1). Researchers agree that because non-human animals cannot speak, it is very difficult to study empathy in them, and while none of the research so far has led to conclusive evidence of animal empathy, “a number of studies are suggestive of some species being affected behaviourally and/or physiologically by the pain or distress of conspecifics” (Edgar et al. 2006, p. 188). These laboratory studies, while ethically untenable because of the pain inflicted on the animals, do strongly suggest that rodents are capable of feeling some kind of empathy.

Animal ethologist Marc Bekoff's research on animals in the field certainly supports the argument that animals experience empathy and have moral lives. He writes in *The Emotional Lives of Animals* (2007) of several cases in which observed animals have demonstrated empathy and moral behavior. For example, he tells stories of a fox funeral (p. 63), a gorilla wake (pp. 64-5), and chimpanzees doing a dance at a waterfall, an act which Jane Goodall has suggested might indicate joyful, even religious behavior (pp. 60-2). Bekoff quotes the philosopher Jeremy Bentham: "The question is not, Can [animals] *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?" (p. 27). Yet not only can they suffer, they appear to be capable of many other emotions, including the ability to feel the pain of others. This suggests that animals indeed can be moral beings. Thus, Wroblewski's portrayal of dogs' moral behavior is not mere anthropomorphization; it appears to have scientific support.

Claude and the Machiavellian Intelligence Hypothesis

Wroblewski's dogs, however, aren't just capable of empathy, they are morally superior to humans; the dog Almondine comes across as the book's most morally redeeming character, the "paragon of animals." In stark contrast to Almondine, Claude, Edgar's uncle, shows himself as the most wicked. Claude, a selfish schemer, uses his intellect to get what he wants. He appears to be exceptionally intelligent. The narrator writes, "It was never a question of whether Claude could learn to do something, just a question of whether it would be worthwhile and how long it would take" (Wroblewski 2008, p. 276). Also, Claude "often declared that a person could get anything he wanted if he was willing to go slow enough" (p. 276). The ghost of Edgar's father, whom Claude has slain, tells Edgar through sign language, "Whatever [Claude]'s wanted, he's taken, ever since he was a child" (p. 240). Claude uses his intellect to figure out how to kill his own brother without getting caught, in order to usurp Gar's dog farm and his wife Trudy. Unlike the dogs, he feels no empathy or love for anyone, only jealous hatred for Gar. Although one of the most intelligent characters in the book, his is a criminal intellect that works through deception. Thus Claude the smart but immoral human and Almondine the virtuous dog stand on the opposite ends of the moral scale. Could humans actually be morally inferior to dogs, as Claude is to Almondine?

In his book *The Philosopher and the Wolf*, philosopher Mark Rowlands presents the idea that our high intelligence may actually inhibit our moral behavior. According to the

“Machiavellian intelligence hypothesis,” apes’ intelligence is a result of their living in groups; such intelligence enabled them to deceive one another more easily and avoid being deceived (2009, p. 60). “In the evolutionary history of apes,” Rowlands writes, “the escalating ability to bullshit goes hand in hand with the increasing capacity to detect bullshit—with the latter, of necessity, just about outperforming the former” (p. 62). He goes on: “Machination and mendacity lie at the core of our superior intelligence, like worms coiled at the core of an apple” (p. 64). According to Rowlands’ perspective, our superior intellect gives us little more than the ability to deceive one another while avoid being deceived ourselves.

R. I. M. Dunbar also discusses how apes use their ability to understand each other’s state of mind for the purpose of tactical deception (1997, p. 80). Dunbar writes, “[H]aving a large neocortex appears to open the way for greater use of tactical deception (and presumably other comparably sophisticated social devices)” (p. 81). If intelligence simply enables humans to scheme and deceive one another, then, as Rowlands and Dunbar argue, perhaps our superior intelligence actually makes us morally inferior to supposedly less intelligent animals like dogs.

Through its portrayal of Claude, *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* seems to be making precisely this case. In addition to his scheming intellect, Claude possesses an uncanny gift for subtly manipulating others. He even fools Almondine. When he first arrives at the Sawtelle farm and sees Almondine for the first time, he “knelt, and it was clear at once that he had been around dogs a long time. Instead of petting Almondine or scratching her ruff, he held out his hand, knuckle first, for her to sniff.... Only after Almondine had finished taking in his scent did Claude touch her.... She closed up her mouth and arched her back in a gesture of tolerant satisfaction” (Wroblewski 2008, p. 60). Claude appears to possess some kind of sensitivity for animals and people, but he uses this ability to manipulate them. Although he comes to the farm with a murderous scheme, he is able to hide this from everyone, including Almondine. She does not seem to sense his intentions, as she reacts with “satisfaction.” Using this same subtle talent for deception, he later seduces Trudy. However, although he can act and deceive, morally he is an empty shell. Capable of murder without remorse, he has no conscience. Claude personifies the “Machiavellian intelligence hypothesis” that Rowlands discusses in relation to apes and humans. He uses his intellect only to deceive.

Bridging the Gap: Co-Evolution

While Claude exemplifies the worst in humans, and Almondine the best in dogs, Edgar bridges the gap between the human and dog worlds. Unlike the other human characters, he is able to learn morality from the dogs. As Mike Peed writes, “[Edgar’s] muteness enables an almost supernatural connection between him and the animals” (2008, p. 6). His inability to speak puts him on an equal playing field with the dogs, which likely increases his sensitivity to their own forms of communication such as body language. As a result, he is more open to what they have to teach him. When he returns with the dog Essay from self-imposed exile in the Chequamegon Forest, he has come to realize the importance of love and repentance:

Now Almondine occupied his thoughts. He hadn’t seen her for two months or more and suddenly it felt like he’d been severed from some fundament of his being. ...Perhaps she would have forgotten his crimes, for which he wanted more than anything to atone. Everything that had happened to him since he’d left made him think of her. Others dreamed of finding a person in the world whose soul was made in their mirror image, but she and Edgar had been conceived nearly together, grown up together, and however strange it might be, she was his other. Much could be endured for that. (p. 457)

He now recognizes that Almondine’s love and forgiveness are far more important than his revenge on Claude. In this way he significantly differs from Hamlet. When Hamlet returns from being sent overseas, his thirst for revenge has become even stronger, while he never shows remorse for how he treated Ophelia. Edgar, on the other hand, realizes his cruelty and craves Almondine’s forgiveness. He was not alone during his exile. Essay and two other dogs accompanied him. His constant contact with these dogs during that time has helped to positively influence his character and make him less angry and more altruistic. If he had been alone, he possibly would only have grown more bitter and vengeful. The dogs help to “ground” him, to dissipate his anger and help him come to terms with what matters most: his love for Almondine.

Edgar seems to personify the view of human morality that writers Wolfgang M. Schleidt and Michael D. Shalter present in their article, “Co-evolution of Humans and Canids,” a view that somewhat differs from that of Rowlands. To them, as to Rowlands, apes are opportunistic individualists. “The life of chimpanzees,” they write,

appears as a frightful caricature of human egoism.... [C]ooperation among group members is...always aimed for one's own advantage and executed with MACHIAVELLIAN shrewdness. The first insight we get from chimpanzee society is: 'We have come a long way.' The high morality we claim as the achievement of our species, however, is a very thin veneer on the old ape. (2003, p. 58)

However, they go on to assert, "The closest approximation to human morality we can find in nature is that of the gray wolf, *Canis lupus*" (p. 58). According to their view, "There is something in the bond among wolves and between dogs and humans that goes beyond that between us and our closest primate relatives, the chimpanzees. Here *we are not talking about intelligence*, but about what we may poetically associate with *kindness of heart*" (p. 59). While Rowlands views humans as just as nasty and scheming as other primates, Schleidt and Shalter argue that "humaneness, which many admire and hold, at least in theory, to be the highest achievement of humanity, was invented millions of years ago by early canids" (p. 60). They argue that canids and the early hominids co-evolved, and they suggest that humans learned social and moral behavior from canids. Wroblewski's character Edgar exemplifies this hypothesis, as he learns moral behavior from the dogs.

Writer Meg Daly Olmert also discusses co-evolution. She writes, "In their quest to become carnivorous, hominids faced the double jeopardy of being both predator and prey.... But they did share one key trait with the animals surrounding them—they too were social. Those who paid the closest attention saw how other animals increased their strength and safety through cooperation" (2009, p. 3). By watching other social animals like canids, early hominids learned how to hunt together. Thus, according to Olmert and to Schleidt and Shalter, canids essentially civilized humans. This view turns the idea of human exceptionalism on its tail.

Through the interactions between the humans and dogs in *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*, Wroblewski seems to be making the case for co-evolution between humans and dogs. In the novel, humans and dogs evolve and learn from one another. On the one hand, the dogs are not ordinary dogs; they are the product of a breeding experiment begun by Edgar's grandfather. They possess "'one extra increment of communication, insight, ability, or all those things,' Mr. Wroblewski explained [in an interview]....The Sawtelle dogs are a behavioral breed" (Wroblewski and Cohen 2008). The Sawtelle dogs are a human construct, the product of a breeding experiment that selects for higher insight, and perhaps superior moral behavior. Also,

the Sawtelles meticulously train them to fully realize their potential. On the other hand, the dogs help civilize the human characters, particularly Edgar. For example, when Almondine stops Edgar from murdering Claude, she acts as his moral mentor. And when Essay and the other dogs accompany Edgar in his exile, his constant physical contact with them calms him; this helps dissipate his rage toward Claude so that he can realize that love is more important than revenge. *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* argues for the more current views of evolution that involve co-evolution, as well as group selection that favors empathy and altruism over individualism.

Jack London and Spencer's "Survival of the Fittest"

While Wroblewski's novel contains parallels with *Hamlet*, it also shares similarities with Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*. The most obvious commonality between the two novels is that both personify dogs and give them a point of view as sentient beings. However, to better demonstrate the significance of the current evolutionary views that Wroblewski's novel endorses, it will be helpful to show how clearly they contrast with the views supported in London's novel. While *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* reinforces the ideas of co-evolution and altruism, London's novel supports individualism and the Spencerian view of evolution that was prominent in the beginning of the 20th century.

When Darwin published *The Origin of Species* in 1859, people had difficulty accepting the notion that all animals are interrelated and that humans descended from a common ancestor to apes and monkeys. "Human" meant moral, civilized, logical. "Animal" meant immoral, bestial, emotional. To think that humans were animals deeply offended many people's sense of human exceptionalism. In the words of Marc Bekoff, "those who would put humans on a pedestal above all other creatures feel threatened by the possibility of morality in animals, since it seems to threaten the special and unique status of humans" (2007, p. 90). As if to compensate for this "threat," Herbert Spencer, who twisted Darwin's ideas around and applied them to society, wrote about evolution as progressive, not a product of random changes as Darwin had proposed (Berkove 2004, p. 243). Spencer coined the term "survival of the fittest." But for Spencer, evolution was not random. As Berkove writes, "Spencer believed that perfection was the inevitable end of humanity and society" (p. 246). For him, evolution was a process of moving away from the primitive into something more advanced, or, as one of my English

professors used to say, “from apes to angels.” Only the “fittest” and strongest individuals would survive to reproduce and carry on their genes to achieve this moral perfection.

Buck, the protagonist in London’s novel, in many ways epitomizes this “survival of the fittest” view of evolution. He transforms from a civilized dog of the south to a “dominant primordial beast who had made his kill and found it good” (London 2003, p. 54). He evolves from an innocent dog-napping victim to an empowered apex predator. His transformation recapitulates Spencerian evolution. The wilderness for Buck is a primordial place where, unlike wilderness in Wroblewski’s novel, morality does not exist. It is the anvil on which Buck’s strength and survivability are shaped, while his moral nature is whittled away. “He must master or be mastered,” says the narrator; “while to show mercy was a weakness. Mercy did not exist in the primordial life. It was misunderstood for fear, and such misunderstandings made for death. Kill or be killed, eat or be eaten, was the law; and this mandate, down out of the depths of Time, he obeyed” (p. 97). Unlike the characters in Wroblewski’s novel, Buck’s survival relies on his rejection of mercy, empathy, and morality. He must relinquish these in order to survive and evolve into the “dominant primordial beast.” His evolution sharply contrasts with Edgar’s development in *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*. While both characters change, and their change occurs in “nature,” morality is what Edgar learns in the Chequamegon Forest. In the London novel, however, morality is what Buck learns to forsake.

However, not only does London’s novel reflect Spencer’s notion of progressive evolution; there is also an undercurrent of Darwin’s concept of atavism, or “reversion” (Berkove 2004, p. 250). Reversion is, according to Berkove, “the atavistic reappearance of a hereditary characteristic that has ‘been lost for many, perhaps for hundreds of generations’” (p. 250). Buck’s evolution, ironically, is a regression. He has to scrape off the veneer of civilization and embrace the amorality of the wild. As Buck grows physically stronger and morally weaker, the narrator reflects on this change: “Civilized, he could have died for a moral consideration...but the completeness of his decivilization was now evidenced by his ability to flee from the defense of a moral consideration and so to save his hide” (London 2003, p. 30). He learns to survive in this primitive, amoral wilderness, and “instincts long dead became alive again. The domesticated generations fell from him” (p. 31). As he continues to devolve, “He was sounding the deeps of his nature, and the parts of his nature that were deeper than he, going back into the womb of Time” (p. 50). Ironically, his progress is his reversion. He forsakes morality and reverts to a

more primitive state in order to survive and thrive in the wilderness. For London, then, “nature” is the place where the truth will be revealed; it is also the atavistic “womb” from which Buck draws nourishment from the past to gain power and strength. This almost seems to run counter to the Spencerian notion of evolution as a process moving from the primitive to the sublime, or from “apes to angels,” but his internalization of the past is necessary for his “progress.” For Buck, primitive strength and selfishness are the end result of his “evolution.” The primordial world is brutal, so his evolution requires him to relinquish morality, which has no place in the wilderness. Neither does altruism; Buck survives and thrives alone.

In stark contrast to *The Call of the Wild*, however, in *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*, morality, altruism, and wilderness conflate, reflecting a contemporary evolutionary biology that focuses on group selection and the importance of altruism and how it affects group evolution. Edgar’s sojourn in the Chequamegon wilderness has changed him. Like Buck, he has evolved: “He’d left in confusion, but his return was clarifying. So much of what had been obscure while he faced away was now evident.... You looked around and discovered the most unusual thing in the world sitting there looking at you” (Wroblewski 2008, pp. 457-8). As for Buck, wilderness is the place where Edgar’s progress has occurred, where truth has been revealed to him. Unlike Buck, however, the important thing he has learned is the importance of love and forgiveness. In *The Call of the Wild*, morality is harmful. It would destroy Buck if he let it stand in the way of his survival. But in *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*, the wild’s lessons are altruism and forgiveness. In both novels, a kind of reversion or return to the wild is necessary for the protagonist to progress. In Wroblewski’s book, however, unlike London’s, empathy and love are not only good, they are the answer to Edgar’s quest. The wild, the primitive, has made him more civilized. Significantly, unlike Edgar, Almondine does not need to exile herself in the wilderness in order to progress into a more moral being. She has never lost her love for Edgar. Yet although Edgar has behaved insensitively in the past, unlike Claude he is able to change. He is the bridge between the human world and the dog world, between immorality and morality.

Altruism and Group Selection

At the end of the book, like Buck, Essay runs into the wilderness. But unlike Buck, she is not alone. She leads the other dogs, and together they join the stray dog Forte. The dogs

relinquish their ties to humanity; yet it is not the individual who will succeed, but rather a group of cooperating individuals. This interconnectedness between individuals closely reflects the contemporary “extended synthesis” view of evolution (Pigliucci 2009). Cooperation among individuals rather than competition leads to increased survival. All beings are interrelated with each other and their environment, and these interactions affect evolution. As Bekoff writes, “The ‘survival of the fittest’ mentality, which pervades so much thinking and theorizing, is increasingly not supported by current research as being the prime mover in evolution” (2007, p. 107). Instead of just individualism and competition, scientists realize that evolution also selects for altruism and morality. Wroblewski quotes Darwin’s *Origin of Species* in the novel’s epigraph:

There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.

Perhaps Wroblewski chooses to use this quote because *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* illustrates the new evolutionary model that builds upon Darwin’s ideas.

According to Marion Copeland, the novel ends not with co-evolution between humans and dogs, but with human extinction and the dogs living on. She writes, “The co-evolution of [dogs’] species and ours, over eons, once an advantage, has become a detriment for the Sawtelle dogs and they are forced to leave us behind in the ashes of our anthropocentric tragedy if they are to survive” (2009, p. 358). In Copeland’s view, immorality has symbolically brought extinction to the human race, while the more altruistic, empathetic dogs have proven themselves the most “fit” species to survive. Certainly the dogs do not need humans anymore. Overall, they have proven themselves morally superior to the people. However, Almondine and Essay are very special dogs. They are the end result of a breeding experiment done by humans to achieve a morally superior dog. They would not exist if not for the Sawtelles, who both bred and trained them to be the superior dogs they are. Not all dogs share their qualities. And on the other hand, Claude represents the worst of humanity. His scheming results in the apocalyptic scene at the novel’s end; if not for his murder of Gar, none of the subsequent deaths would have occurred. Most humans—thankfully—are not psychopaths. Claude, Almondine and Essay are outliers. Perhaps some dogs are morally superior to some humans. But that doesn’t mean that all canines

are better than all people. We share a lot with animals, their best qualities and also their worst. Dogs act out on anger and rage, just as we do. There may even be psychopathic dogs. Wroblewski shows, however, through the interactions between humans and dogs, that we can learn a lot from animals about ourselves.

Conclusion

Thus, through its parallels with London's *The Call of the Wild* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Wroblewski subverts the ideology of human exceptionalism by portraying animals as moral beings, and privileges altruism over selfishness. As Darwin showed well over a century ago, all species are interrelated. We now know that we have more similarities with other animals than differences. As Marc Bekoff writes, "differences among species are differences in degree rather than kind" (2007, xviii). Science shows us that animals possess the same brain structures we have that may help enable empathy, such as the amygdala. Ethologists like Bekoff teach us that animals have moral codes. They might not have the capacity to speak any human language or to lie and scheme the way we sometimes do. There may be times when our conscience does not keep up with our intellect. However, our intellect enables more than just deception. It also allows us to reflect on our feelings and behavior, a process called "meta-analysis." Both intellect and empathy are valuable.

More ethical research needs to be done on the moral nature of non-human animals. We must stop perceiving them as soulless creatures to utilize for our own selfish purposes, as in laboratory experiments, where animals are routinely tortured and killed, and factory farms, where animals are confined in small areas and overdosed on hormones and antibiotics until they are slaughtered to feed us. We need to use both our superior intellect and our conscience to create a society in which animals are respected as beings so much like ourselves, with the ability to empathize and know right from wrong.

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Interview with Carol J. Adams

Lindgren Johnson and Susan Thomas

Editors: In your famous theorization of the absent referent in *The Sexual Politics of Meat* you discuss the various ways that western, patriarchal culture elides violence against animals. Nonetheless, you illustrate how there remains a tacit cultural acknowledgment, despite these elisions, of the pervasive violence that defines our relations with animals: that violence is the very means by which animal metaphors resonate and can help to express the *human* experience of violence, for instance.

Surprisingly, in recent protests of Chick-fil-A president's anti-gay marriage platform there seems to be very little acknowledgement, tacit or tactical, of the company's violence against the animals upon whom it depends and profits. While abstinence from meat is a medium of resistance in these protests it only amounts to boycotting Chick-fil-A and its signature "product" as a way to support gay and lesbian rights. The violence inherent in slaughter has not even been "used" as the means by which to articulate violence against gays and lesbians. Alongside this boycott, the other crucial element of the general protest has been public displays of love in the form of "kiss-ins" staged in front of Chick-fil-As across the country. It is, ironically, in the profession and display of human love that animals and their abuse get lost.

What are the dangers of human love, even love that consciously resists patriarchy (and heteronormativity), in the animal justice movement? Do these protests present a new articulation of the intersection of meat and sexuality that you explore in *SPM*, or is this a different iteration of the same thing?

Adams: This is a complex and thoughtful question. One of the images I saw from the time of the kiss-in was someone dressed as a cow with a sign that said: "Eat Hate-Free Chikin." That to me is an oxymoron—to eat the dead bodies of these animals who have been so badly treated in life and death is to participate in a hate-ful action; but because of the structure of the absent referent, individuals do not see their consumption of dead chickens as problematic.

Human love that consciously resists patriarchy is a love that would be vegan. My friend Dan Spencer, the author of *Gay and Gaia: Ethics, Ecology, and the Erotic*, writes that “the erotic energy that most deeply connects us with others can point to a deeper ecological connection with all of creation.” He argues that “ecological ethics must become the grounding for all ethics, whether business ethics, biomedical ethics, sexual ethics, or international ethics.”¹ This embodied love would involve a consciousness of the impact of our material practices on the earth, subordinated peoples, and all creatures.

But, building an activist community that is responsive to interconnected oppressions is challenging and time-consuming, and the kiss-in illustrates the kinds of work that remain to be done. In answering your question I’ll look at the issues of the sexual politics of meat that are implicit to Chick-fil-A, and which attached themselves to challenges to a heteronormative view of animals, and then at the issues of activism that is in solidarity with other oppressed groups.

Let’s begin by saying what we know about Chick-fil-A. It was started in 1946, just as the United States was going in to what I have called “the fourth stage of meat eating” (meat from dead animals kept in industrial farming situations). Its base is the South, and its biggest growth is in the suburbs of southern cities. Its owner is a Southern Baptist.

Chick-fil-A’s featured product is the dead bodies of chickens. Certainly, the chickens are absent referents whose deaths enable not only the consumption of their dead body parts, but the existence of the restaurant chain and of the wealth of the Cathy family, which enables their “charitable arm,” the Winshape Foundation, to support causes close to their Southern Baptist hearts like opposing marriage equality and promoting the wrongly labelled and harmful “ex-gay” therapy.

Perhaps we might also explore whether the argument that legalizing gay marriages doesn’t destroy heterosexual marriage is accurate. The idea of a gay marriage that is between equals *does* challenge a heterosexual marriage based on inequality; it offers the idea that two subjects can be in relationship. Heterosexual marriages where women are objects of consumption and not equal,

that is an aspect of the sexual politics of meat. I still think that Andrea Dworkin's analysis in *Right Wing Women* is underappreciated. She wrote that right wing women recognize the same issue as feminists (especially violence against women), they just have a different solution (marriage to a man who will ostensibly protect her).

Chick-fil-A sprang to greater attention when The Richards Group in 1995 created an advertising campaign around the idea that cows would, out of self-interest, encourage human consumers to "Eat Mor Chikin." The cows' inability to correctly spell words implicitly reinforced human superiority. (Even if cows could spell, they would not be able to spell correctly.) The cows' inability to spell also inflects class associations because the unlettered class is rarely the professional, middle, or upper class. Inability to control words and incorrect spellings is a marker of disempowerment. The cows in these ads have to be unlettered in terms of learning because they are not literally unlettered, that is unmarked with letters. It is the fate of the literal animal (the absent referent) to be written upon, truly, written over through the metaphoric figuration of the literal, and in many ways to be written upon, violated. Branding, docking, cutting off their beaks, snipping their tails, castrating them, cropping their ears, piercing them, the creation of trans-genic species, all these actions write upon the animal. So, of course, in visual culture, the animal cannot be lettered, that is, a wise and educated user of letters because the animal must bear letters.

Chick-fil-A discontinued its ad campaign at the height of the scare over "mad cow disease," a time when meat eaters reduced their consumption of meat from dead cows and began eating more dead chickens. The absent referent was made too present because of the cultural anxiety about what cows were eating; Chick-fil-A apparently didn't want to appear to be taking advantage of that crisis. Their goal was never to disturb complacency about meat eating.

The "Eat Mor Chikin" campaign also encourages the idea that "horizontal hostility" (disagreements and arguments among disenfranchised groups) is funny. So it helps to feed the viewer's privilege in many ways. The irony is not lost on me that the kiss-in and the conflicted emotions this created—how to support gay marriage without supporting the eating of dead

chickens—could have created an instance of horizontal hostility among social justice groups. The result is fragmented justice movements.

Chick-fil-A exemplifies some of the basic aspects of the sexual politics of meat. It often inflects gender in its advertising: depicting a cow wearing a chicken mask holding a sign saying “Wanna a Piece of Me?”; the “It’s a Grill” Campaign featuring the color pink (which, on the day of its kick off, involved handing out pink balloons and cigars.) Chickens are never seen as in possession of their own body parts (their bodies reduced to and labelled “nuggets,” “strips,” etc.). Moreover, one of the machines that cuts up chickens’ dead bodies is called the “Triple X Chicken Stripper” and is advertised through the metonymic association it presents with a woman’s body.

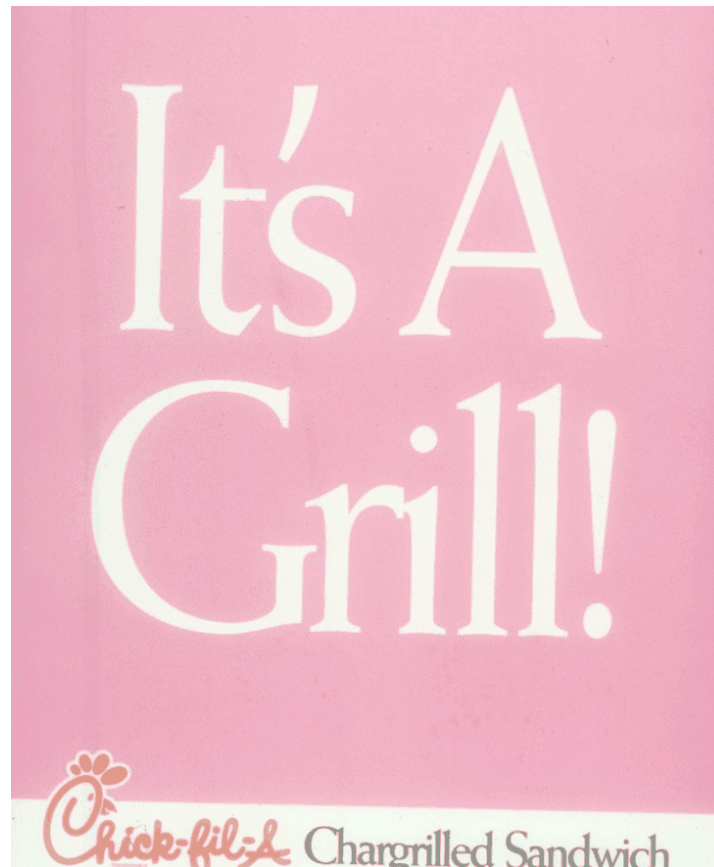


Image courtesy of Carol J. Adams.

The chicken's body is eviscerated literally and conceptually. As a product of violence, it exists within a patriarchal ethical system, in which the (violent) means justify the (consumer's) ends.²

Another aspect of the sexual politics of meat that is functioning in all this is the gendered associations of meat. At this point, sociologists and anthropologists have been publishing academic papers for years that confirm my basic argument in chapter one of *The Sexual Politics of Meat*: meat eating is associated with manliness.

The sexual politics of meat includes the idea that healthy heterosexual men want and need to eat meat. Since *The Sexual Politics of Meat* was published, I have noticed that many popular culture appeals to men (especially white, heterosexual men) seem to be rebuilding what feminism and veganism have threatened. In terms of *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, we see several recuperative responses that seek to reinstate manhood, meat eating, and both interactively. Veganism is burdened by sexual politics, viz., the short lived coining of the term "hegan" for male vegans, in order to establish that "real men eat veggies."

Some advertisements show men "patrolling" other men for "effeminate behavior" (Kentucky Fried Chicken and Slim Jim among others have shown men ostracizing other men if they appear to be failing to conform to established heterosexual male norms).

Heterosexual politics are embedded in other ways, too. Meat ads often articulate the assumption that a woman is available as an orifice for men. Recent examples have exploited homophobia in their formulation: that refusing meat raises questions about one's masculinity *and* sexuality. Or, that refusing meat answers the question about one's sexuality: you're gay. Recent examples of this basic formulation range from a German ad campaign that was proposed (but not pursued) that "tofu is gay meat" to "Gayboy," a vegetarian sandwich on a menu at a Brooklyn deli.

In his "A Queer Vegan Manifesto," Rasmus Rahbek Simonsen also discusses this point:

historically, deviating from eating meat has carefully been tied to the discursive production of masculinity—and not simply in terms of aberration or one's momentary preference for a certain food object—vegetarianism (and more apposite my essay,

veganism) comes to constitute a set of gendered acts that are linked to the whole of what signifies as male (and female), which certainly includes sexuality....As a man, in this manner, refusing to partake in the proscribed consumption of meat disrupts the discourse on male sexuality and gender. In the way that different food items carry specifically gendered connotations (i.e. meat: masculine), we see how male vegans become a problem within heterosexual discourse.³

What occurred in the summer of 2012 around boycotting Chick-fil-A and creating a kiss-in cannot be separated from the sexual politics of meat that enables and cushions establishments like Chick-fil-A. The issue of boycotting Chick-fil-A may have ended up vesting dead chickens as food with more patriarchal meaning, not less. I talked about advertisements that show the patrolling of male behavior which is seen as transgressive—eating vegetables or cooking with (or *like*) a woman is a synecdoche for someone who is refusing all forms of male privilege, including access to women. Last August, in Dallas, a policeman went to Chick-fil-A, bought someone to eat, and then ate her in front of two policewomen who were lesbians. That was the sexual politics of meat on so many levels.

I agree that not discussing the violence inherent in slaughter as the means by which to articulate violence against gays and lesbians was in general a missed opportunity, though I also understand why it was not fully addressed, and some activists have raised this precise point. Jasmin Singer, co-founder of *Our Hen House*, reported, “Many people with whom I’ve spoken feel that having experienced oppression as a gay person makes them more likely to be compassionate toward animals.”⁴ Singer’s online magazine/website *Our Hen House* also did an interview with Nathan Runkle, the founder of Mercy for Animals (and a victim of gay bashing), about his activism for animals as a gay man.⁵

The failure to acknowledge the violence against animals in the production of food for Chick-fil-A is a reminder of the power of the structure of the absent referent of dead animals. It also points out the challenges of intersectional activism.

This was not a protest about the “product” of Chick-fil-A. In this it was unlike boycotts that say “your product is unethical”—like the grape boycott led by United Farm Workers in the 1960s,

protests against the Nestle infant formula product being dumped in Africa in the 1970s, and the non-fair trade chocolate and palm oil boycotts now.

Nor was it like other protests against companies whose owners support right-wing groups like Coors Beer, Carl's Jr., and Domino's Pizza. Once it was decided not only to boycott but to do the kiss-in, then the issue became one of "space." The public displays of love in the form of kiss-ins staged in front of or inside Chik-Fil-As across the country changed the protest.

The "kiss" is an integral part of a marriage ceremony, so the kiss-in wasn't just normalizing what was being deemed as unnatural (gay love), but in a sense also sanctifying a space. They were simultaneously protesting and hallowing, saying "love can be found here."

I asked my friend, Sarah E. Brown, who blogs at <http://queerveganfood.com/>, what she had felt about the kiss-in. She told me, "I was disappointed by the images that popped up on many social media outlets highlighting protest 'kiss-ins' that involved buying and eating the dead animal flesh from Chick-fil-A and posing next to it in mid-pucker, suggesting 'this meat is for us, too.'"

The message thus became: we kiss like you and love you like and *we eat like you*. But why wouldn't it be that message in a human exceptionalist culture? There are many reasons that the kiss-ins operated from within the framework of human exceptionalism; most social change movements do. You don't have to look far for stories from activists on their experiences trying to make connections among social justice causes: hamburger fundraisers for rape crisis centers, or domestic violence shelters that accept "meat" from hunted animals, or an ad for "Take Your Daughter to Work Day" that highlights the importance of the power lunch by saying "Mary Had a Little Lamb..." and showing a lunch consisting of dead lamb parts.

But the question, *how does one do activism from an intersectional perspective?* is a complex one, for which there is no one right answer. I felt it was important to bring in the voices of other activists to address this issue.

In discussing the challenges of getting social justice movements to stop promoting the eating of dead animals, one friend, Adrian Mellori, reported to me, *I actually tried to confront this when a local lesbian was having an event at a place and was like, "Be sure to buy the chicken sandwich!*

For every one they sell a dollar goes to the HRC.” I suggested calmly that people send the dollar directly to the HRC instead of allowing a business to profit from queer activism while also killing an animal to do so. As you can imagine, I was ostracized and laughed off the board.

While intersectional theory has been expanding, we need to acknowledge that intersectional activism has many challenges inherent to it. Katie Carter, who is with Feminist Agenda PDX--an online directory of feminist activism and networking in Portland, OR, wonders *how much and in what ways this kind of theoretical perspective can be practically implemented when it comes to more direct demonstrations of protesting oppression as in the case of Chick-fil-A kiss-ins. Unquestionably, the issue of the violence inflicted on animals by Chick-fil-A as a company was completely ignored – but so were many other issues that intersect with issues of gay rights (e.g. the treatment of Chick-fil-A workers, the existence of giant chain restaurants and the impact they have on smaller, independent restaurants, the impact of chain restaurants on farming and natural resources, etc). Theoretically, these issues are connected in important ways. But when it comes to practical implementation of these points, I think it becomes a lot harder to convey the connections. This is, in part, linked to the nature of protests - you have a very short amount of time to convey your message to people who are likely already somewhat hostile to you because of the fact that you are participating in a demonstration in the first place (based on the stigma attached to activists by many people). You also are very dependent on the media covering your protest and then accurately conveying your message, if you are to effectively reach a broader audience than those who might happen to be direct witnesses.*

If the form of dissent against oppression that you are engaging in is a public protest, I think your demonstration of that issue has to be very direct and clear so that your message can be conveyed accurately. If there are too many messages coming across at once, the points of all the issues may be lost in the shuffle, which doesn't help anything. The connection between marriage equality and animal rights is not immediately apparent to most people, and the work that you would have to do to help people understand the connection would likely need to be more in-depth than could be conveyed at a visual protest like a kiss-in. In my opinion, as activists we have to consider the practical effects of the means of protest we use - is this going to effectively convey our message and (hopefully) convince some people of the point we are going to make?

The question isn't just about *what is the message?* It is about how to create alliances. Adrian points out that it is often hard to say, *"We all need to look at our shit. I contributed to the torture and death of nonhuman animals by shopping here in the first place, but didn't decide to make a move against them until my own life was at risk"* while also saying *"Chick-fil-A is a homophobic business."*

To acknowledge that Chick-fil-A is a homophobic business but not an animal abuse business removes personal responsibility from the activist. And often, oppressed groups have so much going on that it is difficult to imagine they also have shit to work on.

The best activism I have ever done, in my opinion, was being part of a white anti racist organization in which we took 4 months first to look at ourselves, our own internalized white supremacy, and so on before attempting to go outward and fight racism and white supremacy around us. True activism involves evolving as people ourselves and stopping the oppressors that harm us and others. If we only attack them and do not look at ourselves, it is only part of the equation.

Katie picks up on this idea of how one builds solidarity for activism from an intersectional analysis:

A lot of alliance building would need to happen between these two movements that right now are relatively isolated from each other before a protest that engaged both of these issues would be effective. Having been a part of many protests in the past, it is often not appreciated by either side if one protest is 'co-opted' by the agenda of another group - so in the interest of creating a more cohesive social justice movement it would be my opinion that a lot of work would have to be done ahead of time to enable these two groups to effectively engage in a protest that conveyed how their messages intersected, and weren't just two protests happening in parallel that had different agendas, messages, tactics, etc. I think we have a lot of work to do before the protests themselves to build a more cohesive movement in which we, as activists, understand one another, see the connections between our movements, and have discussed how best to work together to bring about a more just world.

I also invited comments from Erin Fairchild, an activist whom I met after she and other feminists staged a protest against PETA while they were in Portland following their hurtful and sexist "Save the Whales" campaign. *If I'd have participated in this protest, I might have made a sign that read "Animals and Humans Deserve to Live With Dignity and Respect," or "Homophobia and Factory Farmed Animals are Bad for Your Health." If I were leading with my heart, that's where I'd have gone. To Katie's points, however, I wonder if that message may have been too complicated or multi-layered for a direct action like the kiss-in? I also would not have expected my comrades in protest to agree with me, or feel called to this intersectionality. In other words, if I had participated in this protest, I would not have needed to know where others fell on the vegan to animal eating spectrum. Their political action has merit to me, regardless of individual views on animal rights.*

In fact, when we protested [PETA's "Save the Whales" campaign] the group of us protesting was banded together as feminists, in this instance focusing on the treatment of women (particularly fat women) - but we weren't all vegan identified, and some of the protesters were meat-eaters. We were asking PETA to offer women of all sizes ("women" within the socially constructed gender binary, "woman" as other to "man") the same level of dignity and respect that they hold for animals. In my mind, the objectification of women and animals, and subsequent violence against both, are absolutely connected and dependent upon each other. And, I don't need everyone I join in action with to share this perspective (unless, of course, we are deliberately taking on that intersection of violence in our activism).

I also believe that there's no "pure space" that any of us as feminists, activists or radicals can occupy that obscures us from the same critical lens through which we view oppressions like violence against women and animals. Liberation based consumer choices have, for example, become terribly difficult to make. I don't expect everyone I organize with to only purchase goods that were made with sustainable and equitable labor practices. I myself am not able to accomplish this - which does not make my lifetime commitment to violence prevention and trauma intervention less worthy. I can't be made immobile by the complex, interlocking system of oppressions that scaffold extreme capitalism.

I believe we should always ask questions, challenge ourselves to think deeper, to look for what we've missed and where we've fallen short. I also believe that upturning structural violence requires us to rely on unexpected allies, to be vulnerable in ways that are scary, and to search for the underlying good intentions of those who challenge us.

Editors: Many have argued that to acknowledge animal cruelty you must actually see animals in the process of being exploited. This visibility is the prerequisite for change (hence the necessarily cloistered nature of slaughterhouses). Similarly, for an interview that you gave for *Satya* in 1995, you argue that because they insist on the visibility of the absent referent “vegetarians think more literally than others”:

We are not seeing food; we're seeing a corpse, we're seeing dead animals. Because we think literally as well as metaphorically, our attempt to move the literal issue will arouse a certain degree of hostility and distress because our culture in general wants to move away from the literal. It wants to disengage.

Recently, though, there seems to be a move *toward* the literal. Farmers' markets, for example, appeal to people because they can buy meat from a farmer who has had a personal relation with the killed animal, “knows where that meat came from,” and can give the consumer that history. Similarly, upscale restaurants and even grocery stores (I'm thinking of the rise of salumerias, for example) advertise their food through the display of whole animal carcasses, allowing and profiting off carnivorous customers' ability to, quite literally, “[see] a corpse,” the very thing you say vegetarians “see.” The thinking here seems to be that if we make the entirety of the (dead) animal visible, whether in the form of that animal's history or that animal's body, then meat eating becomes more ethical, pleasurable, and, of course, “respectful,” a word that gets bandied around a lot.

As long as the process is visible, these practices seem to say, it is right. Can we assume, then, that heightened visibility of killing and seeing the animal *as* animal is not the means to change? If so, where do we go from here?

Adams: There is an aphorism that “if slaughterhouses had glass walls everyone would be a vegetarian.” But in fact, I don’t believe that. As you indicate later in the question, many people are aware of what is happening to animals and still participate in eating them. I would argue that to challenge animal cruelty, meat eating, dairy and egg consumption, it is important to acknowledge the individuality of the animals. If people look at animals as “mass terms” and not as individuals, then they still may not care about what happens to them even if they learn about animal cruelty. Also, some people get off on watching animal cruelty.

As I try to discuss in *The Sexual Politics of Meat Slide Show*, the entire issue of how to transform a visual culture that inscribes oppression through the visual is very complicated. So, first, there is not a *similarly* here in what I am trying to discuss in that interview about relationships between meat eaters and vegans and the idea of watching animal cruelty. I actually don’t think our retinas should be burned with those images. The idea that “vegetarians [by which I meant complete vegetarians or vegans] think more literally than others” is that we know the literal facts about consumption and that when we try to introduce these ideas into a conversation we will not get the welcome we think we will get.

I expanded on this idea in my book *Living Among Meat Eaters* (which many vegans write to tell me they read yearly):

Vegetarians have a tendency to speak literally; our culture avoids the literal. We say meat is muscle from a corpse or eggs are reproductive secretions. While literal thinking is important in understanding the world, especially when the issue is animal exploitation, literal thinking can also trip us up. As I point out in The Sexual Politics of Meat, part of the battle of being heard as a vegetarian is being heard about literal matters in a society that favors symbolic thinking.

You are asked, “why are you a vegetarian?” And you say, “I just don’t want to eat dead animals.” Or, “I think of meat as an animal’s corpse.”

Suddenly, the nonvegetarians--thinking that they were engaging in nothing more than a pleasant “get to know you” question--find that the conversation has changed in intensity. By answering honestly about what you have learned about meat eating and dairy production/consumption—ostensibly factual information—you are prompting a connection in the nonvegetarian with something they have usually blocked out of their consciousness. Suddenly,

somewhere in themselves, a part of them says, “Whoa! What’s happening here? I don’t want to hear this information! This makes me feel uncomfortable. Who is that person to make me feel uncomfortable? Oh, those emotional vegetarians.”

Speaking literally is experienced emotionally.

You stated a literal truth or fact. It is experienced as an emotional statement because its content prompts feelings within the nonvegetarian. Feelings the nonvegetarian does not want to be aware of. You will very shortly thereafter be accused of being emotional.”⁶

I was trying to help vegans understand that when most meat eaters ask someone “why are you a vegan?” they don’t really want to know the answer. In our tendency to be literal we believe in the sincerity of the interaction, when experience might suggest otherwise.

The locavore movement and other friendly slaughter assertions are *not* making *the entirety of the (dead) animal visible*. The animal’s history is what is *not* available, it is not available to us to know exactly how she lived her life, nor how she experienced her death. What we have is the pretense and premise that sufficient information is available for us to conclude that eating her dead body is okay. It is all within a very anthropocentric setting about what is made visible.

What does it mean to say they see the animals *as* animal? Clearly, they see — they ontologize — the animal in question as an edible animal, unlike the way they might be ontologizing companion animals. The still hold an instrumentalized notion of the animal. In *Neither Man nor Beast*, I suggest, drawing on the work of Catharine MacKinnon, that the problem is more the epistemological stance that creates the knowledge/view that animals are edible, rather than the ontological status itself. The latter can be changed if we change the epistemological stance.

For many people, realizing that their “food” is from violence is sufficient knowledge to change their relationships with animals; for some people, that knowledge about violence is not sufficient.

One thing I think we can assume is that the visibility is a part of instantiating the sexual politics of meat. That the performative value of killing is working to communicate not just something about humans against domesticated animals but about gender.

The need to make “the kill” present through reference or in action is a hypermasculine reinscription of the sexual politics of meat. For most eaters of dead animals, the structure of the absent referent means that the killing of the animals is off stage. But the structure of the absent referent does not require that the killing be off stage or unreferenced. It requires that the animal’s life be subordinate to a human’s desire. The structure of the absent referent renders the idea of individual animals as immaterial to anyone’s selfish desires for consumption. In fact, looking at a living being as a disposable life initiates the process. Killing an animal onscreen or by a local butcher in your own kitchen participates in the structure of the absent referent because it makes the animal as an individual disappear. *Someone becomes something* -- that could be one definition of the structure of the absent referent.



Image courtesy of Richard Twine.

After the killing, the animal’s dead body is probably referred to by words that objectify and fragment the body. So, if after the death, the animals are now known only through their body parts (wings, rack, breasts, hamburger, etc.), that is yet another aspect of the structure of the absent referent.

Let's say the structure of the absent referent is xyz, (the literal death of the animal, the hiding of the facts of that death, the lifting of the animal's death to a higher meaning through metaphor and consumption). With the locavore movement, we see x and z still functioning (the objectifying, the eating of a dead object), but y isn't absent; it has been made demonstrably present (the death isn't hidden). Why "y"? And the answer turns on the issue of the way the human male subject is represented.

This trend that you are discussing, while getting a lot of attention, has not actually changed the number of animals being held in captivity. The majority of people are still getting their food from the animal industrial complex (*viz.* Chick-fil-A). Moreover, many of the people I have seen interviewed, while lifting up the idea of oxymorons like "humane slaughter" and other considerations about the treatment of animals, continue to eat dead animals from the animal industrial complex when those "special treatment" animals aren't available to be consumed.

Timothy Bewes observes in *Reification or The Anxiety of Late Capitalism* that "troubling feelings – in particular, the sense of anxiety toward reification – have become virtually universal in advanced capitalist societies" (xii). Later he says, "Anxiety is the consciousness of reification; reification is the anxiety towards reification" (p. 247). Anxiety comes with the territory of reification. Since meat eating is one aspect of the instantiation of reification (the creation of the absent referent), anxiety is one aspect of the meat eater's relationship to his/her activity.

The difference between reification in Bewes's sense and meat eating is that the anxiety against reification contains within it the possibility of reversing reification, but an animal once dead cannot be restored to life. If there is anxiety about our "thingly" quality (are we suspended between life and death by this?), perhaps such anxiety is allayed, in part, or at times, by reaffirming our power to make other beings into things (the impermanence of *things*). The fetishistic attachment to the dead animal as food will always create or motivate the creating of that object (the dead animal), but that motivating act will cause anxiety and that anxiety will leak out and try to find new ways to insulate it from critique. These "Nouveau flesh eaters" are still eating meat from a dead body whose life had been emptied of meaning by the freedom to kill that being.

In *The Sexual Politics of Meat* I talk of the "nothingness of meat." I have often thought about what I am trying to say there. Because the animal who was alive was never "nothing," was always someone in relationship with other someones, but that another being, a human, can determine what happens to them in their lives and pick the time of their death, places them on the road to a "nothingness" that will be the site of fetishization.

Dead bodies deemed as edible become endowed with the quality of "edibleness." Lots of choices were available for what the dead body could become endowed with. It could have been aesthetic distaste or ethical refusal, but out of all the options it is this.

In "The War on Compassion," I wrote that meat eaters bury animals in their own bodies. When nonhuman living beings are converted conceptually into false mass terms to enable their conversion into products, we come to believe that their deaths do not matter to themselves. Animals are killed because they are false mass terms, but they die as individuals. They die as a cow, not beef, as a pig, not pork. Each suffers his or her own death, and this death matters a great deal to the one who is dying.

The instability of meat as a product (something in the process of decay that must be maintained as edible) seems to reproduce itself at the meaning level; it must constantly be rendered as not just edible but marketable, and this is the latest marketing approach.

In *Living Among Meat Eaters* I suggested that we should view people who still eat dead animals and their reproductive secretions as blocked vegans and that their actions and statements tell us what is blocking them. I am not saying they *are* blocked vegans, I am saying if we look at them in this way, what does it show us?

***Editors:* Your M.Div. is from Yale, and your approach to animal being is informed by Christianity and what you describe as a feminist care ethic, one that pays attention to and seeks to care for the vulnerabilities of the body. Yet popular culture seems to be swinging in the other direction, with the locavore movement and its promotion of the intimacy of**

slaughter gaining increasing popularity. More specifically, works by Temple Grandin and Michael Pollan, to name just a few, locate “spirituality” in intimate and “close” acts of killing. What do you make of this trend? How has animal slaughter become the ultimate expression of care, not violence?

Adams: Let’s just clarify that when you say my approach to animal being is informed by Christianity that I am not comfortable with this characterization. I am in dialogue with Christianity, but my approach to animal being is compassion. I find the language and beliefs of Christianity as I understand them (not the dominant culture’s understanding) helpful within a context where that matters.

Popular culture has *always* been in the other direction. The work for compassion is always uphill. That is what I was trying to say in my essay on “The War on Compassion.” As I wrote there, “After watching the movie *Hotel Rwanda* and as I began reading *A Problem from Hell*, among the many disturbing questions that surfaced for me, besides the obvious one, ‘how could we have let this happen?’ was the question, ‘how can we get people to care about animals when they don’t even care when people are being killed?’”

And what I try to show in that essay is that *I was posing the wrong question, because it accepts a hierarchy of caring that assumes that people first have to care about other people before they will care about animals and that these caring acts are hostile to each other. In fact, violence against people and animals is interdependent....The ability to objectify feelings so that they are placed outside of the political realm is another reason people have not cared. Submission to authority requires such objectification, indeed, rewards it. Not only does one learn that feelings do not matter, but even the awareness of the feeling is subsumed within the objectifying mindset. As a result, people may become afraid to care. To care requires that one have the courage to break from the normalizing ideological screen that has posited “it’s okay if it’s an x but not a y.”*

The locavore movement’s spiritualizing of the consumption of dead animals doesn’t surprise me; it complies with basic parts of the sexual politics of meat.

If we listed off all the oppressive things done in the name of spirituality we would have quite a tome! To see that yoga practitioners think being non-vegan is consistent with their yoga practice and beliefs, that Buddhists are able to integrate a diet that harms animals into their lives, that people who meditate leave their meditations and eat dead animals—well, the area of spirituality has always been chained by people’s desire to continue to eat dead animals and milk and dairy.

Just because Pollan and Grandin assert that this is a spiritual act doesn’t mean that it is a spiritual act. I notice how “sacrifice” gets spiritualized, but it is never *our* sacrifice that we are asked to consider or spiritualize, but someone else’s. Spiritualizing of a situation often occurs to displace the political critique.

I think Vasile Stănescu has pretty well skewered Pollan on hunting; and of course Pollan’s spiritualization of the hunt involves several aspects of the sexual politics of meat (male bonding over a slaughtered creature, the act of the hunt itself as constituting a fulfilling and important moment in male identity, etc.).⁷

There is also the ripping off of and reductionism of certain Native American hunting practices that clearly enacts a form of cultural imperialism.

Animal slaughter is *not* the ultimate expression of care, it is merely claimed to be. I think it is a regressive expression of dominance. Out of all the choices they could make in describing it, why this one? What does it tell us?

It’s a classic example of denial, reversal, false naming, and defensiveness: “an act is what I say it is.” Such rhetoric is exploitative and false. In the feminist ethic of care tradition, killing of animals for food fails to do one important thing: ask the animals what they want and respect their answer.

Editors: In your recent work, *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, you explain to the readers that there are several core principles that undergird the feminist ethic-of-care approach to animal ethics. One of these core principles is a person’s “moral duty to oppose

and expose those who are contributing to animal abuse.” Another contends that “human beings have a moral obligation to care for those animals who, for whatever reasons, are unable to adequately care for themselves....” Do these principles you outline include direct action, which you have been reluctant to endorse, and which we would define as any explicitly public and political action (such as strikes, sit-ins, open rescues, and blockades) taken by an individual or a group to highlight a problem? More broadly speaking, what do you think constitutes “care”?

Adams: I have never been reluctant to endorse direct action. I have written prefaces to two books that include stories from women, some of whom describe direct action. For instance, I think Patty Mark’s pioneering work with open rescues is remarkable, and I admire it.⁸

I *have* refused to endorse a certain form of direct action: picketing at homes. I have always clearly explained why I am opposed.

I know what it feels like to have your house targeted. Twice in my life I’ve had that happen. In the 1980s when my partner and I were involved in trying to bring integrated housing to a small city in upstate New York, our house was “egged.” The anti-housing group, a racist group, picked the person who lived across from us as their president precisely so that they would have their meetings across the street from our house. They would gather early, stand outside, by their cars, just talking and talking and staring at our house, which had a large picture window in front. Then, as they left their meeting, they would do the same thing.

I remember one Saturday, bicycling back from a visit to one of the black plaintiffs in the racism suit we had filed against the city, HUD, and the city’s housing authority. (The Fair Housing law identified different classes of plaintiffs—for instance, middle class whites who were being deprived of the benefits of integration and low-income blacks being deprived of decent housing.) She was a young woman and she was dying of lupus. But she had bravely added her name to the list of plaintiffs knowing that this would expose her to criticism and scrutiny. The day I bicycled back home, I felt so sad. She was in such pain, and so frail, and her kids were so little. I turned

the corner onto my street and there were all the cars parked in front of our house. And the white men were coming out of the house, and staring at me.

Their goal was to scare and intimidate. That day, they succeeded.

We did not feel safe in our own home, and that is a terrible feeling.

Elsewhere I have talked about traumatic knowledge. In her book, *The Gender of History*, Bonnie Smith used that term in describing how amateur history (the history associated with women) consists of “the writing of multiple traumas.” She identifies the traumas that women historians of the early nineteenth century would have experienced: they were aware that their rights were eroding in the midst of a time when universal rights were being (supposedly) championed. They or family members had survived revolutions and wars, and at a personal level, had experienced the threat or actuality of rape, poverty, violence, abuse. Smith explains, “death, representing history’s immanence, was always on hand.”

Traumatic knowledge is the knowledge of organized and/or persistent acts of violence. It is painful knowledge—knowledge about everyday practices and everyday sufferings. It feels relentless. It is a major challenge to any individual who experiences it and to any movement composed of individuals who bear its truths. It affects us personally, interpersonally, and strategically.

In my introduction to the new printing of Howard Williams’ magnificent nineteenth-century historical survey of vegetarianism, *The Ethics of Diet*, I applied Smith’s idea of traumatic knowledge to the vegetarians who appear in Williams’ volume. “The knowledge that other animals are being butchered to feed humans, even though other foods are available that require no such Butchery, is also a form of traumatic knowledge.”

For vegetarians, vegans, animal activists, traumatic experiences are re-encountered regularly. This adds to the trauma.

Cathy Caruth suggests that the traumatized “carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess.”

Last October, reflecting on activism and the law, as one of the keynoters at the Lewis and Clark 20th Annual Animal Law Conference, I spoke publicly for the first time about those years in 1980s. I thought that given that I had now written about it,⁹ I could speak about the experiences. But as though proving Caruth correct that we are symptoms of a history we cannot possess, I found myself crying in the midst of the talk as I remembered the experiences of those years.

Is targeting houses a way of spreading traumatic knowledge? We experience the traumatic knowledge of knowing what is happening to animals, so we decide we have the right to make other people feel traumatized because of their role in contributing to animal suffering. Not feeling safe in your home is a terrible feeling. I do not believe in furthering such an experience.

In the 1990s, in Dallas, where we now lived, the church where my partner, Bruce, was one of the ministers, hosted a city-wide Planned Parenthood empowerment program for teens about how to say no. Over several years, Operation Rescue tried to get the church to stop hosting the event. They began by picketing the church with bullhorns and very graphic signs; then they moved to interrupting a church service Bruce was leading, and then, the following year, they picketed our house.

This frightened our two young children. While we were busy talking to the police about the cadre of protestors outside--one of whom had come onto our property, battering our back door ferociously, and all of whom were gathered in front of our house at that moment, with a bullhorn calling to us--unbeknownst to us, our two children were crouched behind a large chair. My older son, who was in elementary school, had grabbed his boy scout knife, to protect his three-year-old brother.

After the police left, we talked to the kids about what bullies were, compared Operation Rescue to bullies in elementary school, and we talked about abortion. I remember my older son asked if he could go tell the anti-abortionists that even rabbits abort.

Several weeks later, as my older son sat in his class, he suddenly felt like screaming, thinking about the protestors. During that time, my three-year-old scanned the environment—was Operation Rescue coming back?

This is why I am against direct action that targets homes where children live. I do not find it theoretically or logistically justifiable. Nothing will convince me that picketing and targeting homes of vivisectors or others where kids live can be seen as legitimate. And what do the children learn? Their parents are probably explaining that those people outside are simply bullies.

I am curious to know how individuals in the animal justice movement decided this is the way to do it. What was the decision making process? Why would anyone want to participate in traumatizing children?

Why would animal activists create traumatic experiences for others presuming that this is the way to end the originating trauma (what is happening to animals)?¹⁰

But I have a larger question, how we decide cause and effect in the animal justice movement and how we know what works, how we measure success.

How does one action (whatever that is) become the litmus test for activism? My question is, how does the privilege granted to those who are dominant influence our actions, our methods, and our campaigns? I discuss this in my article in John Sanbonmatsu's anthology (*Critical Theory and Animal Liberation*): male militaristic language; we have to "rally" around leaders (some of whom have a history of sexual harassment), the methodologies of confrontation, claims that we are at war, that say we must, must, must, watch gory videos ("the animals experience this, the least we can do is watch this"). Who says?

For instance, who decided street harassment of fur-wearing women was the appropriate way to challenge the fur industry? It certainly seamlessly mapped onto sexual harassment of women on the street and helped to sustain the experience that the public space is not the same for women as for men.

How do we come to believe any of these are the best methodologies for change and how do we know they are successful methodologies for change? Why is this the model we have to accept? Who has decided this is the way?

I know that the idea of teaching people how to eat vegan is seen as a privatized solution—and yet every person who learns to trust that they can cook vegan and that vegan tastes good is one less person we have to change. I know that the meat boycott of the early 1970s wasn't about animal justice issues, it was about prices, but it still had the effect that slaughterhouses had to stop slaughtering as many animals.

I don't want to participate in this notion that "these kinds of actions have effects and those kinds don't." I think we don't know.

In an interview with ARZone in 2010, I said, "if the animal rights movement was stripped of its male rights language, its mainly male leaders, and the sexist approach of some of the promotional material, what would we have? We would have to acknowledge that it is largely a movement of women who care about animals. Being a part of a movement that is overwhelmingly female identified is often not seen as positive. So I have always felt that the animal rights movement compensates for its basic female identification by lifting up "fathers" (Singer, Regan, Francione, etc.), by situating these fathers to debate each other, and by making sure that most of the spokespeople are men. When you add PETA and other sexist ads, you find a movement that is trying to talk to men about some of the objects in their lives."¹¹ What is wrong is the compensatory behavior that deflects attention from analyzing and acknowledging this.

I think Fraiman's point about the hyperrational writings of some in the field of critical animal studies raises some interesting questions that relate to the point I was trying to make.

My definition of care is based on the writings of Simone Weil. She famously defined “attention.” She wrote: all our neighbors require of us is that we ask, “what are you going through?” and that we are willing and able to hear the answer.

In the introduction to *The Feminist Ethics of Care: A Reader*, Josephine Donovan and I identified several core principles:

1. It is wrong to harm sentient creatures unless overriding good will result *for them*.
2. It is wrong to kill such creatures unless in immediate self-defense of oneself or in defense of those for whom one is personally responsible.
3. Humans have a moral obligation to care for those animals who, for whatever reason, are unable to adequately care for themselves, in accordance with their needs and wishes, as best the caregivers can ascertain them and within the limits of caregivers’ own capacities.
4. Finally, people have a moral duty to oppose and expose those who are contributing to animal abuse (p. 4).

Notes

¹ Dan Spencer, *Gay and Gaia: Ethics, Ecology, and the Erotic* (Pilgrim Press, 1996), p. 9.

² See Karen Davis’s *Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs: An Inside Look at the Modern Poultry Industry* (Book Publishing Company, Revised edition 2009) and Annie Potts, “Meat Chicks and Egg Machines” in *Chicken* (Reaktion, 2012).

³ *Critical Animal Studies*, 10: 3 (2012: pp. 51-80).

⁴ <http://www.satyamag.com/mar07/singer.html>.

⁵ <http://www.ourhenhouse.org/2011/03/our-hen-house-launches-the-gay-animal-series-featuring-nathan-runkle/>.

⁶ *Living Among Meat Eaters* (Lantern, 2008).

⁷ Vasile Stănescu, “‘Green’ Eggs and Ham? The Myth of Sustainable Meat and the Danger of the Local in the Works of Michael Pollan, Barbara Kingsolver and Joel Salatin,” http://www.upc-online.org/thinking/green_eggs.html.

⁸ Lisa Kemmerer, *Sister Species: Women, Animals and Social Justice* (University of Illinois, 2011) and *Speaking Up for Animals: An Anthology of Women's Voices* (Paradigm Press, 2011).

⁹ “What Came Before *The Sexual Politics of Meat*,” in *Species Matters: Humane Advocacy and Cultural Theory*, ed. by Marianne DeKoven and Michael Lundblad (Columbia, 2011).

¹⁰ Lori Gruen discusses home demos as part of her discussion of direct action in the first pages of her chapter on “Animal Protection” in *Ethics and Animals: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2011).

¹¹ <http://arzone.ning.com/profiles/blogs/carol-j-adams-live-chat>.

Fiction

Allegory of the Alien Invasion

Lisa Kretz*

For much of human history knowledge was communicated orally. Moral understandings were shared, developed, and contextualized from generation to generation. Current moral theorists have argued that storied accounts may better serve to motivate ethical action and engage emotionally than standalone arguments. Over the years I found myself developing a story—which I spoke aloud to students in my introductory classes when we were starting work on non-human animal ethics, altering it and layering on elements year after year. Below is a written version.

It finally happened. You know all those folks claiming UFO sightings? Some of them were actually on to something. In our universe there *is* life beyond planet earth, and it finally contacted us. The first ships landed 2 years ago, and the aliens have been increasing their presence exponentially since then. They now number over 10 billion—a population even larger than humans, the dominant species hitherto. What we call the A.E. (the Alien Era) is marked by alien dominance both in terms of the power they exert over others and their numbers.

The aliens are like us in many regards, but they fail to understand our attempts at communication. They appear mammalian in physiology: they have two eyes, a vertebrate structure, and they bleed. They seem to respond to pain in ways we do and give evidence like grimacing, screaming (what an awful noise that is), and avoiding the source of pain. They have a complicated language we have not been able to decipher, and sometimes their interactions make evident that they have telepathic capacities. They have a body language they use to communicate with each other—it is similar to ours, but they refuse to recognize this similarity. They have never taken the time to observe us in our natural setting with an open mind and open heart.

There are hardly any free humans anymore. These aliens like the taste of flesh, you see, disproportionately more than that of other animals on our planet—so they pen us up and are

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genetically selecting the most docile and weighty of us to breed. Lactating women are milked—and when they saw what we did with veal calves they adopted the same behavior, keeping some human children confined and anemic so that their flesh is pale and tender. Female reproductive products are an expensive delicacy that rich aliens scramble in a frying pan and eat on toast.

There is no consideration of our social relations, our family ties, our romantic desires...we are here to serve their needs and they've got us jailed in such a way we can't even successfully take our own lives to end the pain. And the domesticated humans—the humans that are alien pets—know that some of the aliens live off vegetables alone. The aliens are omnivores, and some of them just choose not to eat humans—we aren't sure precisely why because we can't understand their language. It seems that some of them are partial to treating their pet humans well, and a number of these just refuse to eat humans.

Some domesticated humans report having gone with their owners to rallies with pictures of factory farmed humans on placards and angry aliens marching the streets—some of the aliens even cry purple alien tears at the protests when they look at the pictures. They hold their domesticated humans close to their huge alien bodies with their eight yellow alien arms.

There are human game reserves where the aliens like to let groups of humans roam “wild” within large “natural landscapes” lined by electrified fences. We breed and form family units, and they come and pick us off with their lasers during hunting season to ensure we don't over-consume the existing resources. Since the most impressive human specimens are the fastest and smartest—the leaders of our social units—those are the ones they tend to kill and mount for show. As a result, natural selection no longer helps much in terms of our ability to survive in the long run. It is taken to be a showing of their alienist prowess to be able to shoot, gut, and stuff a human.

And you know they think they are better than us because they have that telepathic language going for them and find us comparatively mentally slow and brutish. And I'm guessing they take the evidence they found of humans' treatment of “lesser species” as a justification for doing the same sort of thing to us; in fact it seems as though they've adopted a lot of our technologies used for slaughtering and imprisoning non-human animals and just adapted them to slaughtering and imprisoning humans.

What I wish is that they could see it from our perspective, just for a moment. They don't need to eat us, and if they were in our shoes—if a larger, more dominant population of different

aliens touched down on earth who liked the taste of *their* flesh and *their* lactating females' milk and *their* reproductive products and *their* babies—they'd hope that dominant species would act with care, not cruelty. Just because we don't have the capacity to speak their telepathic language and aren't as intelligent and powerful as they are doesn't mean that it is right for them to do whatever they want with us. It seems one thing humans have that they don't is an understanding and valuing of moral behavior. But I guess, truth be told, when we were dominant neither did we.

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Art



“Guide Human” (2012) by Isobel Wood, with permission.

Wood poses the following question to consider with this drawing: “If a guide dog is blind, who is the dog’s guide?”

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Book Reviews

Julie A. Smith and Robert W. Mitchell, eds. (2012) *Experiencing Animal Minds: An Anthology of Animal-Human Encounters*. Columbia University Press.

Reviewed by Karen Davis*

Voices of the Living

I thought he was dumb, / I said he was dumb, / Yet I've heard him cry.

– D.H. Lawrence, "Tortoise Shout"

A recurring theme in academic discussions of animals' minds is the lack of verbal language in other species. Lack of verbal language is typically shorthanded as "lack of language," suggesting that the only true "language" on earth is ours. In such discourse, language means human speech and only human speech, whereby our particular cerebral processes issue forth in articulate utterances that simultaneously manifest and predispose our minds in ways that set us high above and apart from all other forms of animal life, whether by degrees or in essence. *Experiencing Animal Minds* presents a range of interdisciplinary viewpoints designed "to shed light on the nature of animal experience and the moral status of animals in ways that overcome the limitations of traditional approaches to animals." Contributors consider whether other animals merely vocalize and make noises, whereas humans verbalize and make sense, and whether the inability of other animals to verbalize their experiences, linguistically in human terms, creates an unbridgeable gap between them and us. It follows (psychologically though by no means necessarily) that if human speech is the sine qua non for determining an animal's value, and other animals lack this trait, then their experience of being alive in the flesh cannot possibly live up to ours, and the desire to believe that morality does not apply, or need only minimally apply, in our dealings with them is strengthened.

Responding to these notions, contributors argue that nonverbal forms of expression, including touch, movement, voice, and a host of ineffable resonances and reciprocities, described by Julia Schlosser, myself, and others in this book, are every bit as important, advanced, and informative ways of communicating and connecting with one another as verbalization is, even

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more so in many instances. Privileging human verbal language as the signifier for the “superior” human brain over Voice, kinesthetic empathy, and countless other forms of expression has more to do with prejudice than with an open-minded interest in the world’s teeming varieties of life.

Experiencing Animal Minds argues for the fact and the importance of the fact that brains are biologically situated and embodied organs, as opposed to the view prevailing in much of conventional science of “our bodies as mere stumps or pedestals for the head and the brain.” In “Brains, Bodies, and Minds: Against a Hierarchy of Animal Faculties,” David Dillard-Wright topples the “decapitation” theory of consciousness as “a static entity or essence in-residence,” observing, rather, the intricate processes and intelligences of the body and the continuity of body and brain, the brain itself being a body part as much as our blood, lungs, and kidneys are. The biological situation of brains within and as constituents of bodies which are themselves environmentally situated and interactive with their surroundings integrates with all of the evidence we have of evolutionary continuity among animal species and a reasoned belief that other animals’ minds are not mere precursors of human ways of knowing but parallel ways of being mentally active and alive in the world.

A question the book raises concerns the approach most likely to gain public sympathy and respect for other animals: whether emphasizing their similarities to humans works best, as in Grey Owl’s belief that the beavers he once trapped before becoming a conservationist have humanlike language, and thus to a certain extent humanlike “reasoning powers”; or whether emphasizing that other animals have their own evolved ways of being in the world, which may or may not be like ours, is most effective. In fact, the either/or approach is a needless worry since both approaches must incorporate the paradoxical reality that sharable experience coexists with unsharable experience among sentient beings. What matters in educating public consciousness, says Brian Lowe in his chapter, “Perceiving the Minds of Animals,” is evocative information: “presenting factually correct data in an emotionally compelling manner.”

A problematic fact is that we can never fully apprehend another’s experience, whether that other is human or nonhuman, with or without verbal language. As much as we may be able to suffer and rejoice vicariously with others, we cannot know for sure whether our sense of their inner experience reproduces their experience. In “Inner Experience as Perception(like) with Attitude,” Robert Mitchell describes hearing a biologist argue that we cannot know if an

immobilized calf having a hot iron attached to his head for several seconds to remove his horns feels the same pain as a human being would feel under similar circumstances.

This was part of an argument about whether alleviating the pain of calves during dehorning matters, if we can't know exactly what a calf is feeling during and immediately following the unanesthetized procedure. Mitchell replies that "unless you assume that calves have no pain experience during the administration of painful stimuli, lack of knowledge of exactly 'how pain feels' to the calf, or whether it is like that of humans, is irrelevant." He concludes his chapter with the suggestion, alluding perhaps to the equivocal poses of concern for epistemological purity that can occur when humans are exploiting animals, that "in our attempts to understand an animal's inner experience, we may be asking for more information than we can obtain even about other humans who speak the same language."

In my chapter, "The Mental Life of Chickens as Observed in Their Social Relationships," I describe my awareness, when I am in the yard with them, that the chickens "are constantly sending, receiving, and responding to many signals that elude me." Even so, the fact that the chickens have their own vocabularies, social discourse, and dramas amongst themselves does not prevent me from interpreting much of their chicken talk, and I know that they accurately interpret much of mine.

I once had a rooster named Ruby who would attack me (against his will; it's a complicated story), until I found an ally in Pola, who was so attentive to me all I had to do was call him and he bolted over from his hens and let me pick him up and hold him, and together we would Crow. Playfully, I got into the habit of yelling, "Pola, help!" whenever Ruby looked ready to strike. Pola would perk up, race over to Ruby, and run him off so cheerfully it was as if he knew this was our little game together. I'd always say, "Thank you, Pola, thank you!" and he acted very pleased with his performance and the praise I lavished on him for "saving" me. He stuck out his chest, stretched up his neck, flapped his wings vigorously, and crowed triumphantly a few times.

A sorrowful echo of the mournful cries of the nearly extinct whooping cranes, evoked by Dillard-Wright in his essay, drifts through *Experiencing Animal Minds* – the animals' captivity, our bigotry, their imminent extinction, our indifference, the fact that we require animals to prove their worthiness to be cherished and respected instead of being tortured, degraded, ridiculed, incarcerated, punished, and extinguished because they are not us, and because we can get away

with it. Yet even when they pass our so often demeaning, stupid, and cruel tests, as Joy Williams wrote poignantly in “The Inhumanity of the Animal People,” in Harper’s Magazine, August 1997, it hardly matters:

Their mysterious otherness has not saved them, nor have their beautiful songs and coats and skins and shells, nor have their strengths, their skills, their swiftness, the beauty of their flights. We discover the remarkable intelligence of the whale, the wolf, the elephant – it does not save them, nor does our awareness of the complexity of their lives. It matters not, it seems, whether they nurse their young or brood patiently on eggs. If they eat meat, we decry their viciousness; if they eat grasses and seeds, we dismiss them as weak. We know that they care for their young and teach them, that they play and grieve, that they have memories and a sense of the future for which they sometimes plan. We know about their habits, their migrations, that they have a sense of home, of finding, seeking, returning to home. We know that when they face death, they fear it. We know all these things and it has not saved them from us.

An example of the tragedy of animals inflicted by humans is provided by contributor Traci Warkentin. In “Thinking Like a Whale: Interdisciplinary Methods for the Study of Human-Animal Interactions,” she recalls that the typical marine environment is a concrete prison, dark and murky, in which captive whales, who are believed to have excellent eyesight and are known to be totally unsuited to the acoustics, walls, objectification and tedium of captivity, are immured. “Captive whales are not free to leave or explore beyond the boundaries of the pool walls,” she explains, noting that the common behavior of trapped adult whales is to swim “slowly in circles with their eyes closed . . . holding back from engaging in any way with the humans on the other side of the glass.” (“He waits and waits to be unseen,” wrote the poet Jason Gray of “The Snow Leopard in the MetroToronto Zoo,” tormented by human stares, the hateful color green, his ancestral memories of White, and his sickening life as a spectacle.)

The episode Warkentin relates is of an encounter between a young orca named Athena and two small children in the dark underwater viewing area. Unlike the adult visitors, the children don’t just stand there staring inertly through the glass but seek to engage with Athena who, being young, swims toward them. They address her by name and treat her “as a subject and unique individual, creating an intersubjective space of interaction.” Athena’s mother, Kiska, meanwhile circles the pool repetitively with her eyes closed. Warkentin suggests a connection

between the stereotypic behavior of the human adults and the adult orca. For both, spontaneity has succumbed to fixed behavior patterns in this rigged encounter in which free agents have come to stare at prisoner-patients, then go away.



“Kiska, an orca whale, lives in solitary confinement at Marineland, Canada” (2011). (Athena died in 2009.) Photograph by Jo-Anne MacArthur, with permission.

This is a crucial point: the orcas will never get away, whereas the humans “move on.” The human mother takes pictures of her cute little children and the cute orca interacting “in playful spontaneity,” photos that, like the visit itself, will fade into forgottenness as quickly and completely as breakfast at Denny’s. I wondered as I read this account what kind of a relationship Kiska has with her own daughter Athena in the pool and how long they will be allowed to stay together before disease, death, or commercial decisions separate them forever. I thought about the fact that Athena will soon swim in hopeless circles with closed eyes like her mother, which she has already begun doing. Similarly, the children will soon act like their parents. Yet even so, they will have things to do in their lives, whereas the orcas will have nothing to do in their lives, and nothing can correct this but the elimination of our wrongful imprisonments of animals.

A few contributors to *Experiencing Animal Minds* focus on questions of whether nonhuman animals are self-conscious, whether they recognize their own minds among other minds, whether they can consciously relive a previous experience as opposed to just remembering it, and so on. Gary Steiner argues that whether or not other animals engage in conceptualization like humans – whether for instance they can not only distinguish black from white but recognize that black and white are colors – is morally irrelevant and that we should “stop trying to recreate animals in our own image and begin to let animal beings be the beings they truly are.” Similarly, Jessica Ullrich argues in “Minding the Animal in Contemporary Art” that we need to recognize “that animal experiences are not just pale imitations of our own.”

Poetry and visual arts that reject conventional portraits of animals and their “owners” to provide more radiant, profound, and surprising images have the ability to cultivate empathy in people and teach us to appreciate other animals for who they are. Speaking for the whooping cranes, whose “wondrous difference of capacities, both within the family of cranes and between cranes and human beings” including their “wide variety of purposive vocalizations,” David Dillard-Wright implores us to see that “what counts about the crane is its unique mindedness – not the crane’s ability to measure up to an invented and artificial anthropocentric yardstick of intelligence.” A broader theory of mind, he says, “will value the crane’s intelligence per se and not only by comparison to human capabilities.”

Let us hope that this broader theory of mind gains traction in academia and reaches the broader population of human beings to change how we behave and feel toward our fellow creatures. *Experiencing Animal Minds* is a resource for animal studies programs and related areas of inquiry including philosophy and the arts. In their excellent concluding essay, “Animal Ethics and Animals’ Minds,” editors Julie Smith and Robert Mitchell write: “The fact that humans and other animals share vocalizations, mating rituals, bodily processes, perceptual systems, and sociality indicates important mental connections between us and them.” The question is whether human beings have the will and the desire to do something that is truly good, or as they put it, intelligent, with this fact.

Flynn, Clifton P. (2012) *Understanding Animal Abuse: A Sociological Analysis*. Lantern.

Reviewed by Jamie J. Hagen, MA*

As an animal caretaker in New York City it's interesting to watch the compartmentalized relationship we have with animals. Little expense is spared when it comes to caring for a pet in the Big Apple. Simultaneously animals are used for fur, eaten by most at every meal, and tested on by the billions by chemical companies for cleaning and cosmetic products. What explains this type of dis-associated social behavior towards animals, and what larger social impact results from this compartmentalization?

There is an undeniable disparity between the care and treatment of pets as companions and the treatment of those animals not recognized as pets in America. Violence towards animals in certain industries doesn't register on society's radar, nor does the role of power and patriarchy in their treatment.

It is with this knowledge that Clifton P. Flynn applies a sociological approach to understanding animal abuse and the connection between animal and human relations in his *Understanding Animal Abuse: A Sociological Analysis*. In a blog post for Humanespot.org Flynn explains:

Over a decade ago, when I first began looking at animal abuse and its relationship to family violence – in particular, woman battering - the role of gender, power, and control soon became apparent. As I broadened my focus to include other forms of violence toward humans, this constellation of variables again emerged. Whether it is serial killers or other violent criminals who harmed animals as children or adolescents, bullies or those who have been bullied who also were cruel to animals, or batterers who threatened or hurt family pets, the abuse of animals by males to exert power and control over their victims – both humans and animals – was a constant theme.

Flynn's book creates a more inclusive sociology of animal abuse through the acknowledgement of socially acceptable forms of animal abuse and a broadened evaluation of the resulting violence. Published by Lantern Books in 2012 as part of their Human-Animal series, which also includes Cheryl Joseph's *Exploring the Animal-Human Bond through a*

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Sociological Lens and Lori Gruen and Kari Weil's *Teaching Difference: Sex, Gender, Species, Understanding Animal Abuse* is highly readable and ideal for college courses, with each of the seven chapters ending in discussion questions. The book is a brief introduction to the topic at just 112 pages but offers extensive resources. The first chapter, "Why Studying Animal Abuse is Important," is online in its entirety on the Lantern Books website.

Why Study Animal Abuse?

Almost anyone who has witnessed the inherent cruelty in factory farming or a modern day slaughterhouse can not help but wonder what larger impact this enormous degree of suffering and violence has socially. In *Slaughterhouse* (1997), Gail A. Eisnitz's groundbreaking investigation of U.S. slaughterhouses, she reports being told by an ex-slaughterhouse employee: "I've had ideas of hanging my foreman upside down on the line and sticking him [with a knife]. I remember telling the personnel man that I have no problem pulling the trigger on a person—if you get in my face, I'll blow you away." The inherent psychological impact of this type of violent, though technically socially sanctioned, work is hard to ignore.

A common reason given to study animal abuse is the psychopathologist's argument that children who abuse animals become violent adults. As Flynn argues, there are significant problems with the use of this framework to study animal abuse:

1. Animal abuse should be studied with a valuation of the harm caused to animals, regardless of the potential eventual harm towards humans.
2. How do we account for the vast amount of animal cruelty (re: legitimate violence) not viewed as animal abuse, given that it falls within legal parameters?
3. Current studies viewing animal abuse as a psychological disturbance disregard the many occurrences of animal abuse that never lead to what is considered disturbed behavior in adult life.

The most widely held definition of animal cruelty describes it as "socially unacceptable behavior that intentionally causes unnecessary pain, suffering or distress to and/or death of an animal" (Ascione 1993, p. 28). This definition disregards violence towards animals in factory farming, animal experimentation, product testing, hunting and trapping, which are all legal forms of animal abuse.

To address this shortcoming Flynn defines noncriminal socially approved violence as *legitimate violence* (p. 92). He continues:

These practices not only appear to have the support of most Americans, but also equally importantly are supported ideologically and financially by powerful social institutions such as religion, science and the government. The result of the extensive amount of socially acceptable violence against animals other than humans may make unacceptable violence – animal abuse – more likely as well. (p. 30)

Flynn's use of a critical sociological analysis recognizes connections between various forms of oppression and violence. The works of eco-feminist Marti Kheel, utilitarian philosopher Peter Singer, and the political philosophy of Martha C. Nussbaum (specifically, her capabilities approach) all similarly contribute to a greater understanding of justice and violence as explored through human and non-human animal relations.

Traditional Links Between Human Abuse and Animal Abuse

Traditionally, sociologists have recognized the abuse of animals as a sign of psychological disturbance in children. Theories of “graduation” argue that children who abuse animals are likely to participate in violent behavior towards humans as adults.

Though some studies point to violent criminals with a history of animal abuse, this type of correlation is problematic due to its retrospective nature. Simply studying criminals and working backwards to find a history of cruelty to animals does not prove causation and correlation.

This criticism by Flynn is not intended to discredit all studies that examine animal abuse. There is a significant correlation between some forms of animal abuse in childhood and violence in adulthood. For example, a 2009 study of those who had witnessed the drowning of animals or who had had sex with animals as children or teens showed that this population was likely to have repeated interpersonal violence (Hensley and Tallichet).

Flynn, however, explains the danger of relying solely on this type of psychopathological view of animal abuse:

In my view, the best evidence to date suggests that the majority of those who abused animals, at least in their youth, do so infrequently, outgrow it, and typically go on to lead

“normal” lives. And if we adopt an overly psychopathological explanation of animal cruelty, we are likely to focus on the most extreme forms of violence and the most troubled perpetrators, at the risk of ignoring the more common forms and causes of abuse. (p. 43)

By drawing out and critiquing these traditional correlations between animal abuse and violence *Understanding Animal Abuse* lays the foundation for a different paradigm for the study, by both social workers and scientists, of animal abuse.

This year a ban on animal testing in the cosmetics industry goes into effect in the European Union, alongside a ban on imports from the United States tested on animals. It's hard to ignore the connection this ban must have to the extensive campaigns against the extensive cruelty to animals conducted by companies such as Huntington Life Sciences. The current political sea change in Europe against the testing of thousands of animals speaks to a growing consciousness regarding the use of non-human animals and a desire to engage with animals in a more ethically and socially responsible way. A sociological lens with an eye to animal/human social relations allows for often ignored connections between different forms of abuse and power in modern society such as this to surface.

What's Gender/Class/Race got to do with it?

As a student of political science and feminist methodology, I was pleased to see Flynn recognize feminist theory (and symbolic interactionism) as a valuable tool in the study of animal abuse. As Flynn writes, “Increasingly, empirical studies on pet abuse and women battering have revealed the central role of gender, power and control in male violence toward both women and animals” (p. 64). Carol Adams’ feminist writings illustrate how gender and patriarchy relate to violence towards animals. Adams views the bodies of women and animals as disenfranchised bodies. The social hierarchy in which men stand above women and women over animals plays out in the dynamics of men who batter women. This hierarchy is evident in the power exerted over battered women through pet abuse. A batterer may abuse a pet or threaten the abuse of a pet as a way to show control and power over a woman and confirm a position of power.

Interestingly, Flynn has applied the theory of symbolic interactionism to explore animal mindfulness through a small qualitative study in the late 1990s. His study found that “many

battered women reported that companion animals were very upset during their battering, even to the point of either trying to protect them during the attack or comfort them afterward” (p. 66). The relationship between a battered woman and a companion animal is important to understand for a number of reasons, one of which is that battered women may stay in abusive relationships to protect a pet from battery or to stay with a pet.

Combining feminist theory and theories of symbolic interaction can inform how we understand the treatment of animals in the study of animal abuse. Animals become worthy of moral consideration as individuals and not just “tools of violence.” The recognition of animals as individuals better enables researchers to understand the deeper impact animal and human relationships may have in violent situations.

On the flip side of this argument, Americans already acknowledge the positive and healing power of some human and animal connections. For example, programs across the country work to connect returning military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder with adoptable dogs who offer emotional companionship to soldiers having a difficult time reconnecting with society or contending with long term psychological trauma.

Moving Forward in Studying and Addressing Animal Abuse

When it was revealed that 2012 presidential candidate Mitt Romney perpetrated homophobic bullying in high school, the nation responded with alarm. Bullying, particularly in the LGBTQ community, has been a topic of great importance in addressing violence in adolescence. Startlingly, Flynn writes, “for boys, the top predictor of animal abuse was being bullied at school, followed by their own indirect bullying of others” (p. 41). How might a better understanding of legitimate animal abuse impact how we understand childhood bullying? Educators should be aware of this connection when working with children and bullying in the classroom.

In closing, Flynn offers a number of recommendations for American policy makers and professionals, along with suggestions for future research. Ultimately these recommendations are meant to serve the ends of reducing animal cruelty, allow for a better understanding of animal cruelty, and address the larger sociological repercussions of animal abuse.

For lawmakers and legal professionals Flynn encourages cross training and cross-referrals between animal-control officers and human-service professionals. This type of communication would allow for a more effective response to human and animal victims of violence. At present, most states don't require cross reporting or sharing of information between departments. Counseling for those charged with animal abuse should be also be required by courts. Currently twenty-seven states require counseling of some kind.

Future Research

First and foremost, future research of animal abuse mandates changing the current American working definition of animal abuse. Researchers must also consider whether abuse should be restricted to intentional behaviors or might instead include unintentionally abusive behaviors as well. Present measurements and samples of animal abuse offer a poor representation of the landscape, with no national database to track the abuse or make comparisons. Introducing humane education in elementary schools, in addition to the military and the police force, may also offer an important opportunity to confront animal abuse and further study the animal-human bond.

Robert Agnew writes in his 1998 study, *The Causes of Animal Abuse: A Social-Psychological Analysis*, "We let those political and social actors with the greatest power determine our definition of animal abuse" (p. 180). To effectively confront animal abuse and the larger sociological impact of this abuse Flynn makes it clear we can no longer allow this to be so. It is also essential to take cultural factors into account including the role of gender, power, and institutionalized violence in theorizing animal abuse. The paradigms of animal abuse *must* incorporate an understanding of legitimate animal abuse. To fully understand animal abuse, social scientists must account for all of those impacted regardless of species, class, gender, or race.

With that in mind, it is also essential to broaden Flynn's scope and consider animal abuse and violence towards animals in non-Western cultures. What can studying the violence of animal sacrifice teach us? What laws exist in other countries to confront animal abuse? What do various religions offer in understanding animal abuse?

Building on Flynn's work, future students can further explore what impact prevalent violence perceived as legitimate in the agricultural, entertainment, and medical fields has on the sociology of violent members of Western society. Students of Critical Animal Studies are well served to read Flynn's text and develop sociological studies of their own.

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Andre Knight (2011) *The Costs and Benefits of Animal Experiments*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Reviewed by Frances M. C. Robinson*

Published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2011, *The Costs and Benefits of Animal Experiments* is one of a series of books being published in partnership with the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics. The content of the book is well structured, with the body of the text divided into the following five parts: animal costs; human benefits; alternative strategies; educational animal use and student impacts; and conclusions and policy recommendations.

A considerable amount of research has been done to provide the information presented in this book, and various statistics are included in order to illustrate the costs of animal experiments to the animals themselves. These statistics are presented in the form of graphs, pie charts, and histograms. The particularly pertinent statistics are also highlighted in the written text. Overall, the book is rich in information, and this information has been handled in a way that is pertinent to the author's argument. However, some of the information that has been presented in the book is also deeply disturbing.

In the process of presenting the statistics that were available to him at the time of writing, Knight also highlights the fact that the statistics for many countries - or, indeed, for some regions within the same country - either were not available or were only approximations. For example, the United States uses the greatest number of animals in scientific experimentation per annum; yet Knight points out that mice, rats, birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians were excluded from the official USA statistics. He also points out that independent calculations have revealed that more than ninety per cent of the total number of animals used per annum in scientific experiments in the USA are members of these particular species (p. 9).

Apart from the global variation in the provision of statistics, there were also variations in what was being included in - or excluded from - the statistics, when those statistics were available. For example, some statistics included only live animals and excluded the substantial number of animals who are killed prior to procedures being carried out, such as those animals killed for the acquisition of their organs or their tissues. Other statistics excluded invertebrates

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and advanced foetal developmental stages (both foetus and dam). In addition, in some cases, there were marked disparities between the estimated totals of the number of animals being used and those reported by governmental agencies. Indeed, Knight points to the lack of international consistency in the provision of statistics for the use of animals in scientific experimentation, as he also shows that the European Union is the only region in which the statistics from different countries are harmonized. He also acknowledges that the United Kingdom includes in its official statistics foetal forms and genetically modified breeding colonies of animals, some of whom are used for tissue harvesting.

Knight argues that it is not only the number of animals that matters, but also what is being reported that matters. For example, of central importance is the impact of a procedure on an individual animal in terms of the stress or the distress that is provoked in the animal as a result of the procedure. In relation to this, and of equal importance, is the concern about the appropriate use of both analgesics and anaesthetics. In addition, he points out that stress and/or distress must also be considered in relation to the physical and the social environment in which the animal is living, and not just in relation to the impact that an experimental procedure might provoke in the animal. Once again, he reports both a variation in and a lack of available statistics globally on such matters.

The place from which the animal is obtained is also relevant to the assessment of the potential cost to an animal in terms of stress and/or distress. He notes that of the 9.9 million instances of animal use in scientific experiments within the European Union in 2008, 84.4 percent were sourced from registered breeding or supplying establishments in the reporting country. However, 20-30 percent of cats, dogs, and ferrets and 45 percent of Old World monkeys were sourced from non-European countries (p. 20).

Knight reports that the largest category overall (42.4 percent) of scientific experiments involving the use of animals focuses on the development, production, or safety evaluation of clinical interventions and other products mainly for human use (p. 21). He also notes that there is considerable controversy not only over the ethical justification for the use of animals in scientific experimentation, but also over the scientific usefulness of animal models as substitutes for the human condition. He offers a number of examples to illustrate discordance between the data derived from animal studies and the data derived from human clinical trials. He also examines in more depth a number of systematic reviews that have been undertaken with the goal of trying to

establish more accurately whether or not animal studies are relevant to the human condition. Knight concludes:

The premise that laboratory animal models are reasonably predictive of human outcomes is the basis for their widespread use in the safety and efficacy testing of drugs and other clinical interventions. However, systematic reviews of the human clinical utility of large numbers of animal experiments selected without bias do not support this assumption. In only 2 of 20 systematic reviews located in a comprehensive search of the biomedical literature did the animal models clearly appear useful in the development of human clinical interventions, or substantially consistent with human clinical outcomes. Furthermore, the conclusions of human predictivity arising from one of these reviews were highly questionable. (pp. 57-58)

Knight then examines the toxicological utility of animal models in predicting potential carcinogens or teratogens in humans. He draws a distinction between the *sensitivity* of a test, which is the ability of a test to detect the compounds that possess the property of interest (true positives), and the *specificity* of a test, which is the ability of a test to detect the compounds that lack the property of interest (true negatives). According to Knight:

On the basis of a multi-company database of 131 pharmaceutical agents with one or more human toxicities identified during clinical trials, [Olson and colleagues] reported a true positive prediction rate of animal tests for human toxicity of 69 percent, and also that study results from non-rodent (dog and primate) species have good potential to identify human toxicities from many therapeutic classes....

However, their positive predictivity is markedly limited by poor specificity for human toxins, resulting in high false positive rates and a lack of toxicological reliability. (p. 73)

Knight points out that it is the poor specificity that markedly limits positive predictivity and that systematic reviews have indicated that animal assays lack reliable predictivity for human toxins in the fields of both carcinogenicity and teratogenicity.

Knight then identifies a number of factors that limit the human utility of animal models. These factors include deficiencies in the methodological quality and the statistical design of many animal experiments, as well as the limitations of the animal models themselves. With

regard to the latter, he offers a number of examples to illustrate discordance between the data derived from the studies of different species of animals. According to Knight:

Species differences in absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination pathways or rates can all influence chemical toxicity, including carcinogenicity. Since many carcinogens must be metabolised to reactive electrophiles to produce their carcinogenic effects, species differences in pathways or rates can affect activity levels of carcinogenic metabolites. (p. 81)

He also offers some examples of rodent carcinogens that are considered to be unclassifiable as to their human carcinogenicity for the very simple reason that the particular mechanisms of carcinogenicity in rodents are absent in humans.

Other factors include the routes of administration of a particular chemical, the effects of stress on the animal concerned, the organs affected and dose-related toxicity. With regard to the latter, Knight points out that investigators commonly assume that the human carcinogenic risk is proportional to the number of organ systems that are affected and that the human carcinogenic risk increases when multiple sex-species groups are affected or when deaths result. However, he points out that this assumption has been undermined. He notes that "Lois and colleagues" (Gold et al. 1991, pp. 11-15) have discovered that carcinogens affecting multiple sex-species groups or causing death are likely to be the same chemicals that affect multiple organ systems. Additionally, Meijers and colleagues (Meijers et al. 1997, pp. 94-102) have discovered that neoplastic lesions in multiple organ systems are more likely to be indicative of dose-related toxicity than of true carcinogenicity (p. 87).

As Knight points out, it may be possible to improve the methodological quality and the statistical design of experiments involving the use of animals; however, the failure of animal models to adequately represent human disease may be theoretically and technically impossible to correct. He explains that the intention behind the genetic modification of animal models is often to make the animal models more closely representative of the human condition. However, there are a number of factors which may prevent any clear conclusions being drawn - not least, those reflecting the intrinsic complexity of living organisms, such as the variable redundancy of some metabolic pathways between different species. It is pertinent to add that there is also evidence of species-specific differences in the expression of cell surface receptors (Mestas & Hughes 2004, pp. 2733-2734), species-specific differences in cell surface receptors (ibid.), species-specific

differences in signalling molecules [cytokines] (Bhogal & Combes 2006; Tarrant 2010, pp. 4-16; Banks 2008, p. 93), and species-specific differences in the integration of signals [G protein-coupled receptors] (Bjarnadóttir, Gloriam, Hellstrand, Kristiansson, Fredriksson & Schiöth 2006, pp. 263-264). This evidence indicates that in biological cells there can be species-specific differences in the regulatory processes as well as in the metabolic processes. In addition, as the biological cell is now considered to be a complex adaptive system, the nature of the behaviour of complex adaptive systems is also of particular relevance to this matter. Moreover, Knight acknowledges that the animal welfare burdens incurred during both the creation and use of genetically modified animals are particularly high.

So what are the alternatives? Part three of the book is dedicated to identifying and critically examining some of the alternative methodologies. Knight points out that it is now considered fundamental to good laboratory animal practice to conduct research according to the guidelines proposed by Russell and Burch in 1959; namely, replacement, reduction and refinement. He also notes that Russell and Burch had stated that refinement is never enough and that researchers should always seek reduction and, where possible, replacement.

Knight also argues that it is not only the scientific constraints relating to the utility of animal models or the social concerns over their use that are helping to drive a change in the attitude of scientists towards the use of alternative methods. He points out that the logistical challenges, which scientists face in relation to the high-throughput chemical testing programmes, are leading many scientists to look for more efficient and more cost effective alternatives. The prominent high-throughput chemical testing programme in Europe is known as REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals Testing Programme); and both HPV (High Production Volume Challenge Program) and The Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals Research Program are the two prominent high-throughput chemical testing programmes in the USA. Knight notes that recent statistics indicate that there is a trend toward an increase in the number of animals being used in scientific experiments and that the high-throughput chemical testing programmes, plus the creation and the use of genetically modified organisms, are the main factors determining this increase.

Although replacement is the ultimate goal, Knight acknowledges that there are many strategies designed to reduce the number of animals used in scientific experiments. Such strategies can be classified as *intra*-experimental reduction, *supra*-experimental reduction, and

extra-experimental reduction. *Intra-experimental reduction* refers to those strategies applied at the level of individual experiments, such as those occurring in experimental design and statistical analysis. *Supra-experimental reduction* refers to the improvement and the development of the best possible practice policies. *Extra-experimental reductions* are achieved through more distantly related developments, such as the international harmonization of testing requirements and the improved production of biological products, including vaccines.

Knight argues that the implementation of the three Rs is also important in the education and the training of young scientists. He points out that in the last twenty years there has been a large increase in both the development and the availability of non-harmful teaching methods, such as computer simulations, high-quality videos, ethically sourced cadavers, preserved specimens, models and surgical simulators, non-invasive demonstration experiments conducted on students, and supervised clinical experiences. However, he notes that the introduction of more humane techniques has been met with some resistance by the educators. The reasons most commonly cited by faculty members who are opposed to the introduction of more humane teaching methods are concerns about their educational efficiency. Knight argues that, given the prevalence of such concerns, reviews of the relevant educational studies are warranted, and he devotes several pages to providing not only a comparative study of some of the educational methods, but also a critical assessment of them. He concludes that the well-designed humane alternatives generally perform at least as well as the methods that rely on harmful animal use; in some cases they achieve better learning outcomes. He also points to the substantial number of animal lives that are saved in the process. He also acknowledges that there is some evidence to suggest that veterinarians trained without harmful animal use may develop higher animal welfare standards.

Knight also points to the potentially harmful effects on students who participate in procedures that harm animals; in particular, he refers to the education and the training of veterinarians. He argues that there is a “hidden curriculum” that endorses harmful animal use and that this curriculum remains commonplace in veterinary schools throughout the world. Perhaps it would be more accurate, however, to argue that this “hidden curriculum” is deeply embedded in the whole of society. Indeed, deeply embedded within both Western philosophy and a number of religious doctrines are misconceptions both about the abilities of non-human animals and about our moral responsibilities towards them.

Knight notes that the development of desensitization-related phenomena in students is a psychological adaptation that enables previously caring students to withstand what would otherwise be intolerable psychological stress. He argues that it is important to educate veterinary students about animal welfare issues and to encourage the development of the critical thinking skills that are needed to negotiate controversial ethical issues successfully. It is reasonable to argue that this is of central importance in light of this “hidden curriculum.” It is also reasonable to argue that the veterinary schools around the world should unite to encourage the highest welfare standards for all animals not only within the schools, but also within society in general.

In the final section of the book Knight draws some conclusions about the costs and the benefits of animal experimentation and the implication of these conclusions to policy recommendations. For example, he notes that the concept of ethical review is sound, but its implementation is flawed. The flaw appears to have been an over-reliance on the assumption that the invasive experiments carried out on chimpanzees and other laboratory animals were likely to be of substantial use in advancing biomedical knowledge. In addition, he notes that deficiencies in the implementation of the three Rs remain marked and widespread in many regions of the world. The contributing factors to this appear to be incorrect assumptions about the human utility of animal models, plus a dearth of interest in implementing the three Rs.

With regard to policy recommendations, he argues primarily that the species protected should be broadened beyond the basic inclusion of living vertebrates to protect all additional categories that raise significant ethical concerns. He points out that regulatory protection should be based upon current scientific knowledge about neuroanatomical architecture; cognitive, psychological and social characteristics; and the consequent capacity for suffering in laboratory environments and protocols. He notes that sufficient scientific evidence exists to warrant the protection of living vertebrates - including advanced larval forms and foetal developmental stages - as well as certain invertebrates. However, he also acknowledges that in recognition of the evolving state of scientific knowledge, where significant doubt remains about the level of development of morally relevant characteristics, the benefit of the doubt should be afforded to species until it becomes possible to clarify the situation. He completes the text with some practical suggestions relating to best practice policies.

With regard to the readership of this book, the implications of such findings extend well beyond the concerns of those who find the use of animals in scientific experimentation morally

unacceptable. Indeed, anyone who accepts without question the ethical argument that the benefit to humans greatly outweighs the cost to animals should read Andrew Knight's book. He or she will learn a great deal from it. It is obvious that the management of the system in which animal experimentation takes place is deeply flawed. On closer inspection, it also becomes obvious that there are some serious flaws in the system itself.

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Rod Preece (2011) *Animal Sensibility and Inclusive Justice in the Age of Bernard Shaw*. UBC Press.

Reviewed By Will Boisseau*

If one accepts the premise set out by Rod Preece that George Bernard Shaw was “*the* central figure of his time,” regarded by many as the greatest Englishman since Shakespeare and a dominant actor in socialist thought, it is mystifying that Shaw’s variety of inclusive justice does not hold more sway in the current socialist movement. By inclusive justice Preece means “the fact that Shaw is concerned with the elimination of suffering of all species, human and non-human alike” (p. 2). One could suggest that Shaw is not deserving of such an elevation to the position of *the* key thinker; it could easily be argued that both Henry Salt and Edward Carpenter have more compelling claims, articulating a clearer concept of what is now called total liberation, and Preece acknowledges that Salt “was in the vanguard of thought – indeed, the pioneer” (p. 167). However, Shaw is chosen for special consideration because his fame undeniably, though perhaps unfairly, outweighed that of Salt and Carpenter. Still, the notion of inclusive justice belongs to all three thinkers, and a fair and comprehensive consideration is given to them all.

The debates Preece considers began in the 1890s, a time of great anarchist influence in the British labour movement, but conversely a period when activists were starting upon the parliamentary road to socialism. There was an intense debate about the scope of a newly proposed working class party; Edward Carpenter believed that any socialist movement must incorporate animal protection into their key aims because it was “the duty of an oppressed group to come to the aid of another oppressed group” (p. 122). This was the key to socialist inclusive justice, which saw all forms of injustice as interrelated: it was impossible to end one form of oppression while others continued. As Salt wrote: “emancipation of men from cruelty and injustice will bring with it in due course the emancipation of animals also. The two reforms are inseparably connected and neither can be fully realized alone” (p. 145). It is clear from Preece’s study that many activists on the left wished to connect the conditions “oppressing the industrial working classes” with those “oppressing working animals” (p. 99), but a far greater number ignored such concerns or actively derided animal issues.

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The main counter trend to the philosophy of inclusive justice, and one that dominated leftist thought throughout the twentieth century, was the belief that an economy of sympathy existed, which meant that human and animal wrongs could not be simultaneously redressed. Put simply, human oppression was a more pressing issue than the supposedly less important one of animal welfare. Even between humans an economy of sympathy existed, with some socialists believing that gender inequality could wait until such a time that class exploitation had ended (p. 70). This excuse for inaction is still used by today's socialist movement and was a huge barrier in Shaw's time. William Morris, for instance, would not adopt a vegetarian diet because "under vegetarianism there would still be class divisions" (p. 40). However, Shaw's vision of socialism relied on his "abomination of [*all*] suffering and the desire to create a world without it" (p. 38). For Shaw, Salt, and Carpenter there was no economy of sympathy; all suffering should be fought, and only then could society progress in a compassionate direction.

One striking aspect of Preece's work is the importance given to anarchist thought in this current of socialist thinking. As Preece highlights, Shaw himself was constantly "flirting with anarchism" (p. 60) and referred to himself as an "anarchist in conduct" (p. 50). Carpenter, too, was "tempted by anarchism, but his realism encouraged him to resist the temptation. He belonged to the anti-state left in heart" (p. 175). Salt's Humanitarian League aimed to attract both socialist and anarchist activists, and there was even "some threat of anarchist infiltration" of the Fabian Society shortly after its formation (p. 54). It is this combination of anarchist idealism and socialist practicalism that makes the philosophy of these three thinkers, as explained by Preece, so appealing. Ironically, it may also be this combination which has led to the ideas of Shaw, Salt, and Carpenter being ignored today: neither socialists nor anarchists are prepared to "claim" the thinkers, both believing they strayed too far into the opposition camps.

Preece's work also acts as a valuable biographical introduction to Shaw, and he is prepared to tackle the "glaring inconsistencies and incompatibilities" in Shaw's thought (p. 266). Attention is given, for example, to Shaw's peculiar attempt to almost singlehandedly found a new religion based around his concept of "Creative Evolution." Without the support of Salt and Carpenter, it becomes clear, Shaw's thinking is clearly muddled and undeveloped. Perhaps more attention should have been paid to Shaw's laudatory comments about Hitler and Mussolini, as well as his consistent support of Stalinism. Indeed, Shaw's support for the Soviet regime seems to undermine the entire philosophy of inclusive justice.

Preece recognises that “human attitudes towards animals, and the actions taken on behalf of and against animals, are an integral and important part of social and political history” (p. 94). This work adds to the growing trend of scholars injecting actions on behalf of animals into the history of socialist thought, and it will interest both those academics and activists who wish to further the place of animals in left wing thought. Works like Preece’s help explain why there was a clear link between left wing politics and animal protection, but also why this relationship was never accepted by more than a minority of the movement.

Film Reviews

***Peaceable Kingdom: The Journey Home* (2010) Tribe of Heart, 78 minutes**

Reviewed By Adam Weitzenfeld*

The subtle power of *Peaceable Kingdom: The Journey Home* lies in its serenity. In contrast to films that capture the horror of human-animal relationships like *Earthlings*, the sensationalism of animal rights tactics like *I am an Animal*, and the trials and quirks of becoming vegan like *Vegucated*, *Peaceable Kingdom* is a deep and personal journey into the human heart and psyche.

Summary

The 2010 *Tribe of Heart* documentary, directed by Jenny Stein and produced by James LaVeck, tells the story of people who, trained as children to repress their feelings for animals, reclaim their innate love for their fellow creatures. Through affirming their love for animals, the protagonists not only bring peace and joy to animals previously destined for slaughter, but also to themselves by vanquishing their cognitive dissonance so that they may become whole again. At the heart of the film is each human's *relationship* to animal others and the animals they are themselves.

Peaceable Kingdom presents four transformation narratives braided into an hour and twenty minute film. Two of the most compelling narratives are those of former cattle ranchers. There are Howard and Willow Jean Lyman, who, in pursuit of financial success, convert their fourth generation ranch into a feedlot with hundreds of cattle. Although they experience love for certain animals, their exploitative orientation to all other animals and the earth does not change until after Howard survives a life-threatening brain tumor influenced by the carcinogenic sprays he uses to maintain his operation. Similarly, Harold Brown, who had learned at a young age not to display his compassion, much later in life comes to forgive and redeem himself through an interaction with a cow whom he adopts from a local farm animal sanctuary.

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There is also the story of Cheri and Jim Vandersluis, who pursue their dream of running a goat dairy. Although they wish to avoid selling their goat kids to slaughter by vending them as pets, Cheri and Jim face the biological and financial realities of their work. Feeling trapped by too many kids and too small of a market to sell them as pets, they sell their kids by the pound until the cries of the goats become unbearable and they seek out a solution that does not compromise their values.

The fourth narrative features Cayce Mell and Jason Tracy, animal lovers who make several large rescues throughout the film. In one rescue, hundreds of hoarded animals are discovered starving on a farm, and in another millions of chickens perch helplessly in rows of battery cages twisted around one another by a passing tornado. While Cayce realizes her humane officer training will do little to protect farm animals who are classified as commodities by law, Cayce and Jason's sanctuary provides a gathering ground of compassion for an intergenerational trans-species community.

Themes

Through the weaving of the four narratives, *Peaceable Kingdom* traverses themes of transformation, conscience, courage, joy, forgiveness, and intergenerational violence and healing. Many of these themes that constitute the ethos of the film are articulated from the very beginning by Harold Brown: "[T]o examine the basic assumptions that you've carried since childhood, to question these and then find that there is another way of being in the world, and then follow that vision or dream... [i]t is a joyous thing. It is going home."

Brown's presence in the film is filled with introspection and social insight. He lucidly recalls his emotional repression and trauma from participating in the selling and slaughtering of animals as a child and fragilely describes the eventual rediscovery of himself through the agency and affection of Snickers, a cow he had adopted on an animal sanctuary. When he visits Snickers a second time, months after they were first introduced, Snickers welcomes him back by bumping his snout to Brown's chest. Brown portrays the event as a light switch that, turned off as a child under the pressures of his family, is turned on once again.

Although his mother said it was okay for him to feel for the animals whom he raised for slaughter, he was warned that he must not display such feelings in public. Farmers, he was told,

must not show too much compassion or they may appear weak. To keep emotions inside is to privatize them, to categorize them as inappropriate for the public sphere. It is to separate values and feelings beyond self-interest and profit from one's public existence, one's occupation. Gender performance is not explicitly discussed, but insinuated in the public-private, rational-sensitive dichotomies associated with masculinity and femininity. Brown's discussion of and confrontation with the hegemonic prejudice against "feminine" sentiments that often accompanies animal husbandry and exploitation falls in line with ecofeminist theory (e.g., Donovan & Adams 2006; Mason 2005).

Snicker's act of thumping Brown signifies to Brown that he could be trusted by an individual of the same species he had previously betrayed. This act of endearment frees Brown to forgive himself. Earlier in the film Brown states his observation that people working with animals may distance themselves out of a belief that they are undeserving of forgiveness. Before one can forgive oneself, a person must recognize that they have wronged, that they are capable of doing otherwise, and that they are fully responsible for both. The idea of forgiveness can thus be very threatening to those who fear being wrong, accepting responsibility, and re-conceptualizing themselves.

As vegan advocates know, bringing up people's complicity in animal suffering often triggers guilt and defensiveness. Those complicit often disavow the fear that they have committed unforgivable acts by simply reasoning that there is no act that needs to be forgiven. The more militantly resistant people are to veganism, the more this suggests that they feel threatened by the responsibility to go through a process of forgiveness and transformation (e.g., Cole & Morgan 2011; Potts & Perry 2010). Yet, despite the initial mental and emotional work it takes to forgive oneself and others, forgiveness in the long-term is a positive and liberating phenomenon, freeing people from the weight of their past actions and identity.

Peaceable Kingdom goes further to explore not only the process of forgiveness by humans, but also forgiveness of humans by other species. The phenomenon that rescued animals may eventually forgive humans, or at least differentiate abusers from caretakers, explains Cayce, means that "[a]nimals are capable of recognizing us as individuals." The proper response is not a moral maxim to reciprocate, but a heartfelt gift "to recognize them as individuals" as well. The presence of the theme of forgiveness in this film fills in a crucial gap other media has glossed over when describing the process of and reasons for becoming vegan.

Human and animal forgiveness is based upon safety and trust, both of which are crucial to empowerment. That animal others forgive humans entails that they are also capable of trusting them. Cheri describes that when she and Jim looked into their goats' eyes "they would look back to us with this obvious trust." Selling them for slaughter broke her heart. Once under the safety and reassurance of other animal advocates, however, Cheri felt empowered to take control over her own life, to take it back from the social and financial pressures that disabled her.

In focusing on human-animal social relations, *Peaceable Kingdom* is also able to bring light to the connections between various forms of intergenerational violence: parents' repressive disciplining of human children's caring dispositions and the reproduction of the sacrifice and separation of baby animals from their parents out of financial pressure. Both of these intergenerational violences reinforce one another, reproducing the same dominant social order, which serves not the individuals' values, but the carnist ideology that such institutions are natural, necessary, and/or normal (Joy 2010). Cayce and Jason's Oohmahnee Sanctuary and their son Aedan serve as a reminder that change and intergenerational healing is possible if we, in Gay Bradshaw's (2011) words, practice "being-sanctuary," cultivating and embodying safe, loving spaces.

Characters like Cheri Vandersluis and Harold Brown serve as models of such a virtuous life, providing inspiration to live a life of courage, compassion, and personal integrity. Ethics, as the film represents, is more than following the correct principle; it is the achievement of eudemonia—the great joy of co-flourishing with fellow creatures. The desire to reconnect – and the joy experienced in reconnecting – even after broken trust is something shared by humans and their companion species.

Image and Sound

One accomplishment of any documentary is to leave its viewers with a character, image, and/or an idea to return to. *Peaceable Kingdom* accomplishes just that, but not in the way most animal rights movies do. Stein and LaVeck scatter provocative images throughout the film, from the heart warming to the heart breaking: the glee of baby sheep playfully head butting the camera, the joy of prancing sheep upon being relocated to a healthful home, the bewilderment of a calf descending down a long chute, the loving affection of shared caresses between goats, the

nurturing care of a mother hen for her fond chick, the wonton disregard for the welfare of hundreds of chicks sealed into a trash bag, and the innocent trust in the eyes of a baby goat who appears to reach out for help with his hoof after having his throat slit.

Tribe of Heart thus accomplishes a film that goes beyond the common sentimentalizing of “cute” and “exotic” animals and the horror visible in the pitiful, victimized bodies of animals in animal rights media. What causes the audience’s heart to warm and break is the stirring of genuine empathy: an identification and potential understanding of what animal others experience. It can be felt in their gestures and in their eyes. They are not mere sentient objects whom we project our fears of suffering and death upon or furry commodities to swoon over. *Peaceable Kingdom* presents animal others as human familiars, for the film bears witness to their “humanity,” or rather our common animality to care for, respond to, trust, and forgive one another. In those moments of identification, *Peaceable Kingdom* orchestrates the tipping point of consciousness as witnessed by the film’s protagonists.

Peaceable Kingdom would not be the sensitive film it is without a soundtrack that embodies the cognitive dissonance between the act of making a living and making a killing. The piano traces the cognitive pacing of the characters during moments of moral fog, when their affections run up against the logic of the socio-economic system they inhabit. The electric guitar shrills like a bare tendon of electricity as butchered bodies of once living animals are pulled along a conveyer. Beating drums accompany female chanting to signify enlightenment and the bliss of coming home to the heart during a character’s conscientious objection to animal exploitation. Through image and sound, the film expertly transfers the affects of its characters—human and animal others—across the screen.

Rarely do people describe an animal rights documentary as spiritual, but *Peaceable Kingdom* is a film worthy of such an adjective, without any of the stigma. Just as Snickers hit Harold Brown in his heart, switching back on the latent power of compassion he had repressed as a child, LaVeck and Stein hit their audience’s heart, not their stomachs. One does not experience disgust and moral revulsion watching the film—compassion does not arise out of pity for the poor animals—but great sadness about the predicament of a society that disciplines humans to accept animal sacrifice and animal others to endure it. Yet there is also joy scattered through the film as the audience bears witness to the characters’ “journey home” and their living in harmony with other species and themselves as the film comes to a conclusion.

Criticism

As beautiful and accomplished as the film is, aspects of its structure, style, and message weaken *Peaceable Kingdom*'s transmission of its vegan vision. Structurally, the film has a cohesive narrative, but it also suffers from a slow pace and fragmented, interjected montages of several plot lines. With the exception of the Lymans and Harold Brown, the other characters feel short-handed. The lack of depth into their personal struggles and insights limits the empathy the film is driven by and for. Given the film is also about the individuality and healing of animal others, it's a shame the nonhuman inhabitants don't receive more depth of treatment either. Besides Devlin, a goat who was rescued as a child by Cayce and who adorably corners her for affection, the other animals given names and a story are easily forgotten.

Stylistically, *Peaceable Kingdom* may not have the breadth of appeal that other films have had in reaching those outside the proverbial choir. The slow progression, ambient music, and its middle-aged, white, rural protagonists do not work in its favor as an advocacy film for a predominantly urban society fed on sensationalized violence, ironic wit, suspense, and information-loaded media. While it isn't as hip, fun, and/or shocking as other films, however, it shouldn't have to be. *Peaceable Kingdom* does something uniquely powerful through its focus on real people's transformations from animal exploiters to animal defenders. It is a valuable counternarrative to the claim that compassion for animals is a product of urban alienation from the reality and "necessity" of food production (e.g., Pollan 2002). The compartmentalization of compassion as a private and supererogatory affair is something that can occur in urban and rural settings, a compartmentalization that places humans in conflict with animals as well as themselves.

As an advocacy film, *Peaceable Kingdom* is strong in a couple ways. First, it arrives at the sweet spot of being normative without being moralistic. It does not prescribe the labels "good" and "bad" to people themselves. Second, it, like its protagonists, does not make compromises on its values. It is unwavering in its message against violence toward and the exploitation of animal others. Interestingly, early in the film, Cayce Mell reflects on an animal hoarding operation gone terribly wrong. Disturbed, Cayce explains that the hoarder "thought she was helping these animals." The editorial decision to include this line may be a nudge to animal

advocates everywhere to be more mindful of whether their tactics and goals really “help” animals in a way they would like to be helped.

The film does not shy from advocating veganism and opposing animal exploitation, commodification, and slaughter; however, through an almost exclusive focus on personal transformation, the film privileges what Kim Stallwood (2012) describes as the *moral crusade* of veganism over a successful *social movement* for animal liberation. Critical animal theorists like Barbara Noske (1997), David Nibert (2002), Bob Torres (2007), John Sanbonmatsu (2011), and Richard Twine (2012)—to name but a few—have argued that making significant progress in dismantling the animal-industrial complex requires a social and political economic critique of capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy, and other systems of oppression. Beyond using their footage and interviews, Stein and LaVeck could have included more information on and footage of the institutions and discourses that keep the animal-industrial complex running, but this may have taken away from the more personal ethos of the film.

Stein and LaVeck’s award-winning 2010 film is a wonderful, moving adventure. It may not keep the attention spans of adrenaline junkies and youth, but it’s sure to strike a heart chord in many viewers. *Peaceable Kingdom*’s presentation of the *social* relationships humans have with animal others, especially those raised on farms and living outside the city, is refreshing and inspiring from beginning to end, reminding its viewers that animal others are not only individuals vulnerable to suffering but are also individuals who, in the words of Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka (2012), are “neighbors, friends, co-citizens, and members of communities” (p. 24).

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If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front (2011)
Oscilloscope Laboratories, 85 minutes

Reviewed by Ian E. Smith*

Director Marshall Curry has described his 2011 documentary *If a Tree Falls* as “a cautionary tale.” Yet his telling of the incendiary Earth Liberation Front (ELF) story is so even-handed that it’s not quite clear to whom the warning is issued or how one might proceed with the requisite degree of caution. *If a Tree Falls* is not a definitive history of the Earth Liberation Front, but as the subtitle of the film suggests, it is one story from that history: the story of Daniel McGowan.

The documentary details McGowan’s involvement with the ELF and the underground actions he participated in: actions that ultimately led to his arrest in 2005. McGowan was formally labeled a domestic terrorist and therefore faced the possibility of an exorbitantly long prison sentence of 330 years for two acts of arson in which no one was hurt. A non-cooperating plea agreement allowed McGowan to serve seven years.

That there are no cartoonish villains or straw men is probably the film’s greatest strength and accounts for the fact that it has been praised by people spanning a vast ideological spectrum. The film does not attempt to convince the viewer of any particular point of view but rather highlights the nuance of the issues involved so a more sophisticated understanding of what is at stake can be had by all. Activists, law enforcement, industry representatives, and even activists-turned-informants are presented in their full humanity. Hardened positions that may have been initially held by those interviewed for the film show signs of softening by the film’s conclusion. For example, the lead prosecutor in Daniel McGowan’s case notes how his harsh view of McGowan, which was initially informed only by the crimes committed, eventually changed as he learned more about the life that McGowan led prior to committing the arsons that are the subject of the film. Likewise, it is more difficult for activists to engage in “snitches-get-stitches” type bravado when a full view is taken of the lives of people such as Suzanne Savoie and Jacob Ferguson. If anything, the viewer is tempted to feel sorrow more than contempt toward the likes of Savoie and Ferguson given that under pressure they betrayed their friends, violated their own principles, and were exploited by law enforcement. And in the case of Savoie, it resulted in only a modestly shorter prison sentence.

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McGowan's activism on behalf of earth and animals followed a common pattern. After a purportedly apolitical childhood on the east coast and a business school education, McGowan learned about the full scope of environmental destruction. This new view of the world left him in a state he describes in the film as "perpetual mourning." He began writing letters, attending protests, and participating in the full spectrum of above ground activism. Without satisfactory results, McGowan joined others to commit a series of high-profile arsons in the name of the Earth Liberation Front.

A similar trajectory has been traced by others and is worth pausing to examine. In *The Weather Underground* (2002)—arguably, another "cautionary tale" that asks a similar set of questions for activists—Mark Rudd says that the mass killing by the United States government in Vietnam was "knowledge that [individuals active in the Weather Underground] just couldn't handle, it was too big, we didn't know what to do." How sincere individuals act and function in the face of ecocide, genocide, and/or animal holocaust remains an outstanding question. A conventional life may not be possible or defensible in such circumstances; conventional morality may not be a reliable guide.

So what are we to make of director Marshall Curry's description of the film as "a cautionary tale"?

Surely one interpretation that many viewers are apt to make would be to construe the film as a warning to activists who may be growing tired of politics as usual and are considering the possibility of property destruction. For such a viewer, the film provides an idealistic and likeable character in Daniel McGowan and shows how his life was so drastically disrupted: former friends provided evidence against him, he was separated from a new wife and loving family, and was forced to serve time in the harsh conditions of a Control Management Unit (CMU) that restricted his access to the outside world to an extent far greater than the typical prison experience. He has been branded by the government as a terrorist.

This interpretation would suggest that activists must persist in operating, if not within the system and if not within the confines of the law, then certainly not beyond symbolic civil disobedience. The rate of progress may be almost imperceptibly and maddeningly slow, but to allow emotions to carry one toward actions such as property destruction and arson is both a strategic and a personal mistake with consequences that should not be taken lightly.

A more interesting interpretation for those who are inclined to support Earth Liberation Front (and Animal Liberation Front) actions would be to exercise caution in deciding who one decides to work with—if one is to work with others at all. Further caution needs to be exercised in speaking of actions after the fact. The arsons themselves were executed with great care resulting in years of fruitless investigation on the part of the FBI. But McGowan's most significant mistake was speaking with informant Jacob Ferguson, who at that time was cooperating with the FBI and was wearing a wire to ensnare others into incriminating themselves.

There is a caution that needs to be exercised in selecting targets. In one case, McGowan and his comrades acted on inaccurate information and burned down a university horticultural research center having thought that research was being conducted on genetic engineering.

Daniel McGowan's role in the film does not decisively weigh in favor of either interpretation. At points, he expresses regret in ways that could suggest he would not support tactics such as arson and property destruction. At other times, his regrets seem more like the inevitable regrets that come with experience, regrets that actions could have been operated more effectively and with less risk. And regret about speaking with Jacob Ferguson.

A curious omission from the film is the word "anarchism." The narration describes Eugene, Oregon in the late 1990s as a "hotbed of activism," but that seems vague to the point of being almost deceptive. The visuals from the film include many black flags and encircled letter As but no explicit mention of anarchism either in the narration or amongst the interview footage, yet it was anarchism that largely fueled the fire in the Pacific Northwest at this time in history. In fact, following the 1999 WTO protests, Eugene Mayor Jim Torrey described the city as "the anarchist capital of the United States," and mainstream media outlets regularly referred to the "Eugene anarchists" as if they constituted a political faction.

The omission would not be so strange had the filmmakers not done an otherwise excellent job of presenting the political context that Daniel McGowan entered—and that contributed to his radicalization—when he arrived in the Pacific Northwest. The filmmakers pick up the story line several years prior to McGowan's arrival and examine how this history influenced the decisions that were made by the Earth Liberation Front.

To his credit, Daniel McGowan has urged others to move forward in a reflective way, neither uncritically glorifying all that was done nor dismissing it outright:

[I]t's imperative that we discuss tactics and strategies in a way that people can actually hear and listen to what each other are saying...I, for one, can take any criticism levied on me regarding actions that I have been involved in. In that way, we can move the conversation forward on how to resist ecological destruction in a serious and principled way, without losing so many of our friends to prison, burnout and despair.

The concerns that motivated Daniel McGowan have not gone away. They have multiplied. The destruction of what makes life possible persists, and if anything, the sense of urgency must be even greater now as time and opportunity slip away. The urge to “do something” may be strong to the point of being maddening, but not anything will work. Strategy—and in some sense, caution—is not a luxury but a necessity.

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JCAS: Submission Guidelines

Editorial Objectives

The Journal for Critical Animal Studies is open to all scholars and activists. The journal was established for the purpose of fostering academic study of critical animal issues in contemporary society. While animal studies are increasingly becoming a field of importance in the academy, much work being done under this moniker take a reformist or depoliticized approach that fails to mount more serious critique of underlying issues of political economy and speciesist philosophy.

JCAS is an interdisciplinary journal with an emphasis on animal liberation philosophy and policy issues. This journal was designed to build up the common activist's knowledge of animal liberation while at the same time appealing to academic specialists to address the important topic of animal liberation. We encourage and actively pursue a diversity of viewpoints of contributors from the frontlines of activism to academics. We have created the journal for the purpose of facilitating communication between the many diverse perspectives of the animal rights movement. Thus, we especially encourage submissions that seek to create new syntheses between differing disputing parties and to explore paradigms not currently examined.

Suggested Topics

Papers are welcomed on any area of animal liberation philosophy from any discipline, and presenters are encouraged to share theses or dissertation chapters. Because a major goal of the Institute for Critical Animal Studies is to foster philosophical, critical, and analytic thinking about animal liberation, papers that contribute to this project will be given priority (especially papers that address critical theory, political philosophy, social movement analysis, tactical analysis, feminist, activism and academia, Continental philosophy, or post-colonial perspectives). We especially encourage contributions that engage animal liberation in disciplines and debates that have received little previous attention.

Review Process

Each paper submitted is initially reviewed for general suitability for publication. All submissions will be read by at least two members of the journal's editorial board.

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JCAS is currently reviewing its style guide requirements. Please contact the editorial board for further information.

The manuscript should be in MS Word format, in 1.5 line spacing and 12 point Times New Roman. Good electronic copies of all figures and tables should also be provided. All manuscripts should conform to American English spelling.

As a guide, we ask that regular essays and reviews be between 2000-8000 words, and have limited endnotes. In exceptional circumstances JCAS will consider publishing extended essays

(up to 15,000 words). Authors should supply a brief abstract of the paper (of no more than 250 words).

A brief autobiographical note should be supplied which includes full names, affiliation, e-mail address, and full contact details.

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