Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen, editors
Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth
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Jason Wyckoff (University of Utah)

Jason Wyckoff is a Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Utah. His work on the ethics and politics of human-animal relations has appeared in Journal of Social Philosophy, Hypatia, and Animal Ethics and Philosophy: Questioning the Orthodoxy (ed. Elisa Aaltola and John Hadley) (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015). His paper "Analysing Animality: A Critical Approach" was awarded the 2014 Philosophical Quarterly Essay Prize and was published in the July 2015 issue of the journal.

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During the long period in which most philosophers approached ethical issues involving animals with the same individualistic presuppositions that characterized most applied ethics, ecofeminists and care ethicists were among the few theorists to explore the politics and relational character of human-animal relationships. Ecofeminists generated a substantial literature on the topic, and the past three decades or so have seen the publication of a fair number of collections presenting feminist perspectives on human-animal relations (for example, Gaard 1993; Adams and Donovan 1995; Donovan and Adams 2007; Kemmerer 2011). So when coming to a new volume that walks this well-traversed terrain, it's hard not to approach it with the thought that there had really better be something new here. Happily, *Ecofeminism* delivers the fresh goods.

Carol Adams and Lori Gruen have collected twelve new essays by established and emerging scholars and activists, organized in groups of six under two sections entitled "Affect" and "Context." This grouping reflects ecofeminists' acknowledgment of the relational character of ethics and the self (to which ties of feeling and interdependence are central--indeed, constitutive) as well as the corollary commitment to situating moral and political questions historically, spatially, and socially. The contributions cover theory and praxis, and range in scope from the global to the highly personal. Going in, the reader should be aware that most of the chapters deal more heavily with intersections with animals than with the earth per se, but the contents will be of interest to environmental ethicists, animal ethicists, and the growing number of theorists and activists who see humans' coexistence with nonhuman animals in political, not just ethical, terms.

Preceding the book's two major sections is the editors' wide-ranging and substantive chapter "Groundwork," which quickly dispels the worry that we will have seen all of this before. Adams and Gruen provide an insightful examination of intersectionality theory early on, noting that subordination by race, gender, class, nation, and colony has been accomplished in part by the animalizing of the oppressed. The introduction then promptly establishes an understanding of ecofeminism as a fusion of care and justice perspectives, rather than a binary-perpetuating rejection of justice in favor of care. Readers unfamiliar with ecofeminism's history will appreciate the editors' overview, which is particularly notable for its recognition and restoration

of marginalized voices in historical and contemporary animal advocacy movements.[1] "Groundwork" also features excellent sections on the representation of animals in art and media, and the appropriation and distortion of ecofeminist insights by both critics and animal liberationists.

Contributors to the "Affect" section address compassion (Deane Curtin), joy (Deborah Slicer), and grief (Gruen), as well as participatory epistemology and sympathy (Josephine Donovan), *eros* (pattrice jones), and interdependency (Sunaura Taylor). This section of the book is noteworthy for the emphasis that several of the authors put on the *activity* of feeling for and with others.

In his argument that compassion is more morally basic than rights, for example, Curtin distinguishes between compassion, on the one hand, and care or empathy, on the other, preferring to think of care and empathy as capacities that make the "*developed* moral capability" of compassion possible (40; emphasis in original). Compassion "blends reason and feeling together," and allows us to be emotionally transformed through the exercise of practical reason. Because it does not elevate rational personhood over nonrational nature or emotion, compassion does not generate an extensionist ethic that would accord moral status to animals on the basis of likeness to humans (54). Slicer, in turn, uses personal narratives of her interactions with two horses to explore the sense of humor and capacity for joy that humans and nonhumans can share with each other, especially through play and (since even friendly horses can pose a danger to humans due to sheer size and strength) the development of trust and mutually formulated norms of joint action. Slicer's use of narrative appeals to the function of stories to represent others as subjects (60–61), and again we see affect bound up with the activities of learning, recognizing the subjectivity of others, bonding, and responding to one another's cues.

In her chapter on death and grief, Gruen argues that vegans must acknowledge that even mindful coexistence with other animals necessitates death, killing, and failures to assist. Growing plants results in the deaths of animals, and the choice to adopt one dog may mean that another is killed in the shelter. Even more anguishing is the choice faced by humans whose companion cats cannot or will not eat vegan food. In the face of all of this, Gruen argues that rather than resigning ourselves to quietism we must confront what Judith Butler calls a "moral remainder," and acknowledge that "[l]iving with other animals requires paying more attention to grief, mourning, and maybe shame" (136). This prescription appears in the chapter section "Practicing Grief," which emphasizes that grieving is not just the felt experience of grief, but is something that is *done*.

Donovan's "Participatory Epistemology, Sympathy, and Animal Ethics" is perhaps the most puzzling chapter in the "Affect" section, not because of its thesis but because of the route taken to it. Beginning with idea that quantum indeterminacy undermines Newtonian subject-object epistemology whereas quantum nonlocality suggests a "cosmic communicative interconnectedness" (78), Donovan argues for a version of panpsychism and uses it to motivate a relational and participatory epistemology that enables sympathy through connection. The

[1] The book also features a timeline of intersectional nonviolent activisms inserted vertically onto the right-hand pages.

difficulty here is that although panpsychism is by no means certainly, obviously false, it does seem that any defense of panpsychism (including Donovan's argument from quantum mechanics) will likely be even more controversial than the conclusion that she wants ultimately to defend: that knowledge is not a subject's mastery of an object but, rather, the product of conversation between subjects communicating, in part, by conveying emotion.

Taking up the issues of connection and recognition, pattrice jones begins her excellent chapter "Eros and the Mechanisms of Eco-Defense" with a welcome distinction between liberation movements and more conservative petitions for "reactionary 'rights'." Drawing inspiration from the queer and gay liberation movements of the 1970s, she writes that "[w]e need a theory and praxis of animal liberation that resuscitates the queer spirit of rebelliousness and generous connectedness" (91). jones notes that heteronormativity imposed on humans and animals maintains the masculine dominance of the binary gender system, and argues that "[p]atriarchy and pastoralism both require fairly relentless preoccupation with and control of reproduction (and, hence, sexuality)" (98). Locating similar patterns in the oppressive control of human and animal sexuality, jones demonstrates that the animalization of Africans by Europeans required a denial of homosexuality among Africans, just as same-sex encounters between nonhuman animals were written off by European science (98). The grow-or-die imperative of capitalism further fuels the drive for conquest and subjects all energies and desires to the logic of profit and expansion. This mandates the reproduction of animals used as resources as well as of human workers and consumers, reinforcing the preoccupation with control of sexuality, all to the detriment of *eros* (99-100).

Along with the contribution by jones, the other standout chapter in this generally strong collection is Sunaura Taylor's "Interdependent Animals: A Feminist Disability Ethic-of-Care." Combining a piercing critique of ableist animal ethics with a splendid articulation of a relational ethic that centralizes interdependence, Taylor argues that environmentalists and animal welfarists (by no means a Venn diagram crowded in the center) tend to present domesticated animals, in particular, as "unnatural, undignified, and dependent . . ." (120). When dependency is understood as deficiency measured by the prevailing standards of productivity, mutual benefit, equal power, and what is generally called intelligence, it becomes undignified. Furthermore, the dependency of domesticated, farmed animals is often used as a rather perverse justification for raising and killing them; as Taylor summarizes the all-too-familiar argument, "[t]he domesticated animals we consume are dependent on us for their very existence. By eating them we are doing them a favor" (114). If, as Taylor argues, this "eat-them-to-save-them" perspective on dependent animals suggests a general prerogative of the powerful to dominate those dependent Others whom they have brought into existence, then the implications are troubling to say the least. They may, indeed, be ghastly.

Taylor also challenges the extinctionist view, endorsed by some animal advocates, that we should not only cease the forced breeding of domesticated animals but that domesticated animals do not belong in our world and, in short, should not exist at all (121). To the extent that this position depends on assumptions about naturalness and the indignity of dependency, it is hand-in-glove with ableist assumptions about low quality of life for disabled people and, indeed, "about which lives are worth living" (122). Taylor joins Donaldson and Kymlicka (2012) in holding that dependency--a condition in which every human finds herself for some period or

periods, be they long or short, in her life--is not intrinsically undignified, but becomes so only through our responses to it. She concludes by asking whether "[i]nstead of continuing to exploit animals because they are dependent on us, and instead of leading these animals to extinction as a potential vegan alternative, could we not realize our responsibilities to these animals whom we have helped to create? Could we not recognize our mutual dependence on each other, our mutual vulnerability, our mutual drive for life?" (124)

To a reader of a certain temperament who is excited by creative work on the mutual construction and reinforcement of intersecting modes of human and animal oppression, reading the chapters by jones and Taylor in succession, as they appear in the book, is sort of like sliding from New Year's Eve right into St. Paddy's Day and somehow having the whole thing take place at Carnival.

If affect is integral to a relational ethic of care, per the book's first section, then the contextualization of moral questions is a sensible next step. Two chapters in the book's "Context" section explore broad themes: Richard Twine's essay on the possibilities for universalism in animal ethics and Greta Gaard's weighing of the prospects for new ecomasculinities, ecogenders, and ecosexualities. Three place particular moral issues or cases in context: food and edibility (Ralph Acampora), the narrative(s) of the Michael Vick dogfighting case (Claire Jean Kim), and the representation of animality in a particular visual scene (Adams). One chapter (by Karen Emmerman) addresses tragic choices and moral repair. The themes explored in this section encompass intersections of animality, gender, race, nationality, and colonialism.

Twine employs intersectional constructions of species, race, and nationality in an elegant argument against the uncritical use of "cultural" justifications for animal exploitation (which, among other things, essentialize and de-temporalize "culture") as well as vegan advocacy that ignores cultural, economic, racial, and geopolitical variation. He argues that the increasing globalization of Western food practices and consumption patterns necessitates a universalist perspective, but also maintains that "[a]ny attempt to advocate for large-scale changes in eating practices cannot subsist alone upon ethics and must acquaint itself with the sociological, historical, and cultural dimensions of eating and human/animal relations" (204). In "The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Michael Vick," Kim (whose work Twine discusses in some detail) makes the case for a robust critique of Vick's involvement in dogfighting that avoids both the racism of some of Vick's critics and the speciesism of his defenders. Like Twine, Kim argues that animality and racialization cannot be conceptually separated, but where Twine operates on a more abstract plane to defend the possibility of culturally sensitive, universalist animal advocacy, Kim uses a single case study to highlight the dangers--and indeed, incoherence--of both racist animal advocacy and speciesist anti-racism. Taken together, their two chapters contribute a valuable and nuanced perspective on the intersections of animality, colonialism, ethnicity, and, especially, race.

Several of the book's contributors discuss "contextual moral vegetarianism (or veganism)," construed either as the recognition of "both the moral centrality of a vegan diet and contextual exigencies that impede one's ability to live without directly killing or using others" (Gruen, 130), or a view that couples the wrongness of food practices that perpetuate oppression and hierarchy with the permissibility of those that, though they involve the use of animals, do not (Acampora,

147-48, following Warren 2000). Acampora takes the reader on a quest to find a version of contextual moral vegetarianism (CMV) that avoids speciesism, condemns cannibalism, and authorizes subsistence hunting and "humane" farming--a quest that Acampora ultimately concludes is futile. He begins with a hypothetical case of a "lost tribe" that occasionally preys upon and consumes the flesh of human outsiders, while practicing rituals and developing a mythology that expresses (or at least attempts to express) respect and care for those whom they eat. Assuming that these practices are wrong, Acampora argues that no version of CMV can, without committing to speciesism, hold caring cannibalism immoral while holding subsistence hunting or "humane" farming permissible (156). The journey does meander a bit, but Acampora's chapter rewards multiple readings.

Gendered intersections receive special attention in the contributions of Adams and Gaard. Readers who have already encountered *The Sexual Politics of Meat* will be familiar with Adams's earlier analysis of the photograph "Ursula Hamdress," in which a pig in panties is seen leaning backward on a couch in an unmistakably erotic pose (Adams 2010, 65). In "Why a Pig?" Adams revisits the image, arguing that the use of a pig in particular makes for an image in which features that "animalize, sexualize, racialize, and [signify] youthfulness interact" (220). Gaard builds on Marti Kheel's "insight that *all environmental ethics are constructed through the lens of gender*" (238; emphasis in original), arguing for the need to explore a plurality of ecogenders and ecosexualities, including potential ecomasculinities. Feminists who regard masculinity as an inherently oppressive gender expression might take issue with Gaard's characterization of particular ecogenders as "masculinities" on the ground that the new ecogendering would be such a radical revision of our gender concepts that it would--all to the good--eliminate masculinity altogether. But where there is something to take issue with, there is something of interest.

In a chapter that recalls the themes of Gruen's essay on grief and grieving, Emmerman applies an ecofeminist approach to moral repair to a poignant personal case. Eschewing hypothetical scenarios designed to probe our intuitions about the ethics of choosing between nameless children and dogs trapped in burning houses for reasons unknown, Emmerman guides the reader through her own agonizing experience of having to decide whether to give her infant son, who was unable to breastfeed, a formula that contained non-vegan vitamin D_3. Faced with a concrete dilemma in which allowing her son to starve was not an option, Emmerman was forced to confront the moral remainder left by the animal suffering and death that her choice necessarily entailed.

This is engaged ethics in an ugly world, and in many ways Emmerman's chapter is most vividly representative of the book's orientation to ecofeminism. What the collection as a whole conveys, primarily, is the roots-in-the-dirt entanglement of the various strands of social life with human and nonhuman animals. With animal studies now making the transition from applied ethics to social philosophy, *Ecofeminism* makes worthy contributions to an emerging and exciting literature.

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