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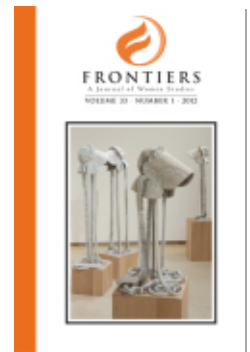
## Vegetarian Ecofeminism: A Review Essay

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# Vegetarian Ecofeminism

*A Review Essay*

GRETA GAARD

Although the roots of ecofeminism can be located in the work of women gardeners, outdoor enthusiasts, environmental writers, botanists, scientists, animal welfare activists, and abolitionists over the past two centuries, ecofeminism's first articulation in the 1980s was shaped by the convergence of the peace, antinuclear, and feminist movements. In the past two decades ecofeminism has developed so rapidly that the time for a broad review of it has already passed; even recent taxonomies do not adequately describe its internal variations. For these reasons, I have chosen to trace the branch of ecofeminism that has been the subject of most disagreement by feminists, ecofeminists, and environmentalists and is the least understood. This misunderstanding (and the subsequent misrepresentation) of vegetarian ecofeminism must be addressed, I will argue, because this branch of ecofeminism is the logical outgrowth of both feminism and ecofeminism. For if ecofeminism can be seen as the offspring of feminism, then vegetarian ecofeminism is surely feminism's third generation.

Since its inception ecofeminism has had a contentious relationship with the idea of animal liberation. While some ecofeminists have remained silent on the topic of animals, others have emphasized the oppression of nonhuman animals (speciesism) as implicit within an ecofeminist analysis, arguing that speciesism functions like and is inherently linked to racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and naturism. Outside of ecofeminism some feminists have been particularly vocal in their opposition to giving equal moral consideration to the interests or the rights of nonhuman animals. To vegetarian ecofeminists such opposition runs counter to the fundamental aims of feminism. As Lynda Birke explains, "One of the strengths of feminist thought is that it is never 'just' about women: it is a critical discourse that tends to ask uncomfortable questions about everything."<sup>1</sup> Vegetarian ecofeminism puts into action the feminist insight that "the personal is political" and examines the political contexts of dietary choices as well as strategic and operational choices in science and economics. What prevents some feminists and ecofeminists from politicizing

their sympathies for animals and interrogating the ethical and political contexts of “personal” choices involving other animals?

This essay explores that question and others through the analyses and practical applications of vegetarian ecofeminism. First the essay surveys vegetarian ecofeminists’ diverse origins and motivations. Then it traces the path that many vegetarian ecofeminists followed, beginning by making connections between specific objects of oppression (that is, animals and people of color, women and animals, or animals and the environment), growing to include associations among several objects of oppression (animals, people of color, women, gays and lesbians, nature), and arriving at an analysis of the structure of oppression itself. The essay then examines various conceptual developments of vegetarian ecofeminism that have contributed to ecofeminist theory overall. Finally it suggests directions for future development and activism.

As the various liberatory movements for social and environmental justice strive to build coalitions toward common goals, alliances will have stronger foundations if they are built on an understanding and appreciation of the motivating forces that power one another’s activism. To that end this essay provides a window onto the passions and perspectives of vegetarian ecofeminists.

#### ROOTS OF VEGETARIAN ECOFEMINISM

To date vegetarian ecofeminism has been explicitly articulated through the work of scholars and activists such as Carol Adams, Norma Benney, Lynda Birke, Deane Curtin, Josephine Donovan, Greta Gaard, Lori Gruen, Ronnie Zoe Hawkins, Marti Kheel, Brian Luke, Jim Mason, and Deborah Slicer. The development of vegetarian ecofeminism can be traced from its marginal appearance in two ecofeminist anthologies—from Léonie Caldecott and Stephanie Leland’s *Reclaim the Earth* (1983), which featured one essay addressing animal liberation, and Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein’s *Reweaving the World* (1990), which included essays critiquing the practices of animal sacrifice and hunting—to the emergence of vegetarian ecofeminism in my *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature* (1993).<sup>2</sup> But its roots go back farther, and draw on the experience of sympathy for nonhuman animals, contemporary animal liberation theories, the countercultural movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and decades of activism and thought in feminism.

#### *The Power of Sympathy*

Most people who are not born into a vegetarian culture but become vegetarians by choice do so based on their sympathy for other animals. Today the facts of animal suffering are well known. In U.S. laboratories between seventeen

million and seventy million animals are killed every year. In factory farming operations six billion animals suffer and die annually—sixteen million each day. Dairy cows are regularly separated from newborn calves so that their milk can go to humans while their infants are chained in tightly fitting crates for four months and fed an iron-deficient diet until they are slaughtered. Chickens are debeaked and crowded five to each sixteen-by-eighteen-inch cage, their natural life spans of fifteen to twenty years shortened to two. Pigs are confined in narrow steel stalls with concrete floors, while sows are kept in a continual cycle of pregnancy, birth, and artificial insemination, their piglets taken away from them before they have even had the chance to suckle. Of these practices, as well as those in hunting and animal experimentation, Brian Luke forcefully comments:

I am appalled by the abuses themselves—shooting, trapping, and poisoning; branding, castrating, forcibly impregnating, separating mother and young, tail docking, debeaking, confining, transporting in cattle cars, and slaughtering; burning, cutting, gassing, starving, asphyxiating, decapitating, decompressing, irradiating, electrocuting, freezing, crushing, paralyzing, amputating, excising organs, removing parts of the brain, socially isolating, inducing addiction, and imposing disease—these acts are repellant because of what they do to the animals. My moral condemnation of the acts arises directly from my sympathy for the animals.<sup>3</sup>

Vegetarians are people who are able to translate their compassion and sympathy for the suffering of nonhuman animals into their own dietary choices. Vegetarian ecofeminists argue that only by forestalling our sympathies for other animals are humans able to overlook the enormity of animal suffering.

Long before the construction of animal rights theories, compassionate women and men spoke out in defense of animals, condemning the uses of their bodies in food production and consumption, hunting, trapping, hat decorations, furs, and in scientific research. Arguing that “the disposition to care for animals is not the unreliable quirk of a few, but is rather the normal state of humans generally,” Luke points to the widespread practice of living with nonhuman animal companions, the beneficial effects of nonhuman animal companionship in therapy, the great lengths that people will go to in order to rescue trapped or endangered animals, and the almost universal presence of mechanisms for expiating guilt in cultures that hunt or slaughter animals as examples demonstrating “the strength and depth of the human-animal bond.” The fact that enormous amounts of social energy are expended to forestall, undermine, and override our sympathies for animals is itself a measure of how strong these sympathies truly are. Luke examines the ways that human sympathies for nonhumans are managed and undermined through the belief in hu-

man supremacy; through the systematic denigration of nonhumans; through the propaganda or “cover stories” promulgated by the animal industrial complex, the scientific establishment, and the hunting industry; through a widespread denial of the harms actually suffered by animals in food production, vivisection, and hunting; through the active denial of animals’ subjectivity and their social construction as willing victims; and, finally, through the derogation of sympathy itself, typically done in gender-specific ways (that is, sympathy for animals is tolerated in women but derogated in men).<sup>4</sup> Human sympathies for nonhuman animals must be undermined early in life, for as many vegetarians have observed, children often refuse to eat meat when they discover its origin, while even the children of hunters may refuse to hunt; their sympathies ally them with the animals, and severing this alliance is a process of acculturation.

Vegetarians and ecofeminists have broken through these socially constructed restraints on our interspecies sympathies in two ways. First, they have been able to make the sympathetic connections between human experiences and the experiences of other animals: Mothers can “empathize with the sow whose reproductive freedoms have been denied and whose nursing experience seems so wretched”; survivors of rape or domestic violence can imagine “feeling like a piece of meat,” though this violence is not to be equated with or confused with *becoming* meat. Moreover, people of color, women, gays, and lesbians all know the experience of being hunted—of being “prey” in Western culture—and some ecofeminists have even experienced being prey for other nonhuman animals.<sup>5</sup>

Of course most vegetarians and ecofeminists have had no personal experience similar to another animal’s experience of confinement, isolation, and suffering. As Josephine Donovan observes, however, the belief that “humans have an innate sense of sympathy and that this is the basis for moral awareness” can be traced back to a number of eighteenth-century theorists, including David Hume and Adam Smith, and, as contemporary environmental ethicists argue, sympathy provides knowledge that forms the basis of any environmental ethic.<sup>6</sup> But the ability to sympathize, like all emotions, is influenced by our social and political contexts. As Carol Adams explains, “How one has dealt with one’s own pain influences one’s ability to care about and respond to another’s suffering.” Because Western culture has defined ongoing suffering as “unmanly,” many men learn to repress or deny their own suffering and are unable to sympathize with others’ suffering. In a culture based on the denial of feelings and the denigration of suffering, people of all genders may respond by denying their own emotions, by making those who suffer invisible, by dissociating themselves from the suffering by rationalizations, or by identifying with

the aggressor. The outcome is that in the effort “to protect oneself from feeling one’s own pain,” writes Adams, “one cannot feel anyone else’s pain either.”<sup>7</sup> As a way of dealing with suffering people in such cultural and political contexts may refuse to identify with those who suffered or continue to suffer and instead identify with those causing the suffering, with those in power. For those who are able to break through the barriers to sympathy, a contextual political analysis of animal suffering is the next step in developing a vegetarian ecofeminist critique. As Donovan explains, because “no ethic . . . exists in a political vacuum,” effective activism and theory require both sympathy and political analysis. “People exercising attentive love see the tree; but they also see the logging industry,” she writes. “They see the downed cow in the slaughterhouse pen; but they also see the farming and dairy industry. They see the Silver Spring monkey; but they also see the drug corporations and university collaboration.” While the political analysis is essential for formulating an effective response, “The motivation for that response remains the primary experience of sympathy.”<sup>8</sup>

It is not easy to break through the cultural restraints on our sympathy for animals or other oppressed humans. As Luke explains:

All of us, whether vivisector or vegan, have been subject to mechanisms undercutting sympathy for animals. How long and to what extent we submit to these mechanisms is not a matter of rationality: to cut off our feelings and support animal exploitation is rational, given societal expectations and sanctions; but to assert our feelings and oppose animal exploitation is also rational, given the pain involved in losing our natural bonds with animals. So our task is not to pass judgment on others’ rationality, but to speak honestly of the loneliness and isolation of anthropocentric society, and of the damage done to every person expected to hurt animals.<sup>9</sup>

The power of vegetarian ecofeminism is based not on judgment of other humans, but on sympathy for other animals.

### *Animal Liberation*

With Peter Singer’s groundbreaking text *Animal Liberation* (1975) and Tom Regan’s *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983), the defense of nonhuman animals was framed as a matter of reason, not emotion. Contemporary animal liberation theory and activism continues to rely on these two major theoretical approaches, the utilitarianism advanced by Singer and the animal rights theory advanced by Regan.<sup>10</sup>

To defend the rights of nonhuman animals, both Singer and Regan invoke the concept of speciesism, defined as an arbitrary form of discrimination that gives preference to one's own species over all other species and that functions in a way that is similar to racism or sexism. Agreeing that speciesism is a form of inequality that must be rejected, Singer bases his defense of animals on sentience. "If a being suffers there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration," according to Singer. Singer's utilitarian defense of nonhuman animals argues that if a creature is capable of suffering and enjoyment, that creature has interests that are as worthy of consideration as are those of any other sentient being's equal interest.<sup>11</sup> Regan's deontological defense of animal rights, in contrast, is based on a being's reason and intelligence rather than on that being's capacity for feeling. If it is a moral imperative to treat all humans as ends in themselves and not merely as means to another's end, Regan asks, what justification can there be for treating nonhuman animals as means rather than as ends? Distinguishing between moral agents (those capable of making rational moral judgments) and moral patients (those who cannot make such judgments but who are still entitled to be treated as ends), Regan then argues that if human moral patients (that is, infants, those who are severely mentally handicapped, or otherwise unable to reason) are entitled to be treated as ends, it follows that nonhuman moral patients are also entitled to be treated as ends; to do otherwise would be speciesism. On this argument Regan bases his theory of nonhuman animal rights.

Using these different approaches, both Singer and Regan conclude that animal experimentation, factory farming, hunting, using animal skin or fur as clothing, and eating animals for food are morally unacceptable acts. If humans treated other humans in this way—hunted them for food, used their skins for clothing, experimented on their living bodies—we would quickly denounce these acts as morally unacceptable. What prevents us from recognizing the immorality of treating nonhuman animals in these ways is the pervasiveness of speciesist thinking.

Although some vegetarian ecofeminists certainly feel a sense of solidarity with the work of Singer and Regan, both Singer's utilitarianism and Regan's deontological defense of animal rights theory have been critiqued by vegetarian ecofeminists on the basis of these theories' sole reliance on reason and their exclusion of emotion. "If reason were the sole motivator of ethical behavior," writes Gruen, "one might wonder why there are people who are familiar with the reasoning of Singer's work, for example, but who nonetheless continue to eat animals."<sup>12</sup> As Luke explains, these approaches to animal liberation fail not only because "the crucial step in their arguments, that humans and other animals are relevantly similar, cannot be established by reason alone," but also

because such arguments “fail to capture the moral outlooks of many in the animal liberation movement.”<sup>13</sup> Singer’s and Regan’s argumentation perpetuates “an unnecessary dichotomy” between reason and emotion when both offer valuable information in the process of ethical decision making, according to Gruen: “Certainly it is possible that a decision based on emotion alone may be morally indefensible, but it is also possible that a decision based on reason alone may be objectionable as well.”<sup>14</sup> Vegetarian ecofeminists argue that it is not reason alone, but rather the combination of sympathy and a reasoned analysis of cultural and political contexts that provides a more reliable guide to ethics and action.

Contemporary animal rights activists, building on the arguments advanced by Singer and Regan, offer a four-fold rationale for vegetarianism. First non-human animals’ capacity for suffering, their possession of interests that must be considered, and their right to be treated as ends are all reasons that their lives should not be taken to feed humans, particularly when humans have other means for obtaining nourishment. But there are other good reasons for vegetarianism. Currently grain that could be used to feed humans is used instead to feed animals for human consumption; eating low on the food chain leaves more food available to feed the world’s hungry. According to John Robbins, the world’s cattle consume a quantity of food equal to the caloric needs of 8.7 billion people, nearly double the entire human population on the planet in 1987. Feeding grain to livestock wastes 90 percent of its protein, 96 percent of its calories, 100 percent of its fiber, and 100 percent of its carbohydrates.<sup>15</sup> As Peter Singer contends, animal agriculture is ecologically destructive: One pound of steak requires five pounds of grain, 2,500 gallons of water, and about thirty-five pounds of eroded topsoil. Farm animals in the United States produce two billion tons of manure a year (ten times that of the human population), and already nearly half of Central America’s tropical rain forests have been destroyed to provide rangeland for cattle to feed North America.<sup>16</sup> Finally human health is at risk, as common diseases of the industrialized world—cancers of the breast, colon, cervix, and prostate; heart disease; high blood pressure; atherosclerosis—have been linked to a meat-based diet. As more and more antibiotics, hormones, and pesticides are used in agriculture, they are passed in higher and higher concentrations up the food chain. Moreover, human bodies are not adapted for a diet of heavy meat consumption: Our teeth, for example, have few canine incisors for ripping and tearing flesh but many flat molars for grinding plant material, and our intestines are twelve times our body’s length—well suited for extracting nutrients from plant material—whereas carnivores’ intestines are just three times their body length.<sup>17</sup> For all these reasons—world hunger, ecological devastation, human health, and ani-



mal suffering—animal rights theorists and activists advocate vegetarianism as a diet of compassion and ethics.

### *Counterculture*

In the late 1960s and early 1970s many countercultural activists became vegetarians in the context of the Vietnam War protests, choosing a peaceful diet as a complement to their public stance of nonviolence. In response to “posters that showed the devastation of people and property in Vietnam,” one man asked himself, “What am I doing eating meat? I’m just adding to the violence,” and became a vegetarian.<sup>18</sup> Another nonviolent Civil Rights activist described the connection to vegetarianism in these words:

Under the leadership of Dr. King I became totally committed to nonviolence, and I was convinced that nonviolence meant opposition to killing in any form. I felt the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” applied to human beings not only in their dealings with each other—war, lynching, assassination, murder and the like—but in their practice of killing animals for food or sport. Animals and humans suffer and die alike. Violence causes the same pain, the same spilling of blood, the same stench of death, the same arrogant, cruel and brutal taking of life.<sup>19</sup>

For many countercultural activists, the principles of nonviolence applied equally to international politics, race relations, interpersonal relations, and dietary ethics. The vegetarian “bible” for these activists, *Diet for a Small Planet*, was first written in 1971 by then twenty-six-year-old Francis Moore Lappé, who went on to establish the Institute for Food and Development Policy.

Lappé reports being motivated to write *Diet for a Small Planet* out of a sense of urgency to provide a diet that would combat the problems of world hunger, the environmental devastation caused by an animal-based diet, and its associated health risks for humans. Her research focused on the overconsumption of meat-eating nations, and the ways that meat eating functions as “a protein factory in reverse.” To her delight Lappé found that “virtually all traditional societies based their diets on protein complementarity” using “grain and legume combinations as their main source of protein and energy.” By studying the traditional diets in Latin America, the Middle East, India, China, Japan, Indonesia, and Korea, Lappé developed a series of vegetarian recipes that gained widespread popularity. By the time of the book’s twentieth anniversary in 1991, *Diet for a Small Planet* had gone through five editions, and its arguments and insights had been cited and built upon by feminists, vegetarian activists, and animal rights philosophers alike. As Carol Adams recalls, Lappé’s book “had a

profound effect on numerous feminists” and other countercultural activists because “it provided”—for the first time—“an understanding of the environmental costs of eating animals.”<sup>20</sup>

### *Feminism*

Historically, cultural feminists can point to over a century of women’s activism on behalf of animals. As Josephine Donovan has observed, many first-wave feminists advocating either vegetarianism or animal welfare reform included Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Margaret Fuller, Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Elizabeth Blackwell, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward, Victoria Woodhull, the Grimké sisters, Lucy Stone, Frances Willard, Frances Power Cobbe, Anna Kingford, Caroline Earle White, and Agnes Ryan.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the majority of the antivivisection activists, animal welfare activists, and vegetarian activists have been women, and throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries their defense of animals rested on appeals to human compassion and sympathy.

Second-wave radical cultural feminists such as Constantia Salamone, Carol Adams, Laurel Holliday, Marti Kheel, Aviva Cantor, and Gena Corea exposed the similarities between the oppression of women (sexism), the oppression of animals (speciesism), and the oppression of people of color (racism).<sup>22</sup> Aviva Cantor, for instance, often points to the linguistic (and thus conceptual) linkage of women and animals in such derogatory terms for women as “sow,” “bitch,” “pussy,” “chick,” “cow,” “beaver,” “old bat,” and “bird-brain.” Linguistic association with animals has also been a method of demeaning Jews and people of color, as Nazi propaganda equated Jews with “vermin,” and blacks have been called “coons” or “jungle bunnies.” The specific similarities between Western culture’s oppression of animals and the oppression of African Americans in the early U.S. slave trade has been explored by Marjorie Spiegel, who illuminates the linkages between speciesism and racism.<sup>23</sup> Thus, from the start, vegetarian feminists recognized the conceptual and structural similarities among sexism, speciesism, and racism.

Along with cultural feminism, the lesbian feminism of the 1970s also saw meat-eating as a form of patriarchal domination, and many lesbian-feminists became vegetarians. Drawing on Elizabeth Gould Davis’s popular work in *The First Sex* (1971),<sup>24</sup> Adams’s “The Oedible Complex” (1975) was the first lesbian feminist essay to document a history of women’s vegetarianism and to suggest a link between male violence and a meat-based diet. That link was developed more fully with Laurel Holliday’s *The Violent Sex* (1978). Though not all lesbians had read or were familiar with the specific arguments of these founda-

tional texts, the connection between vegetarianism and lesbian feminism became part of popular knowledge and was manifested in lesbian culture through the omnipresent potluck social. Lesbian utopian novels regularly depicted the peaceful, separatist utopia as vegetarian. From its beginnings in 1976, the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival has served only vegetarian food. The Bloodroot Collective, founded by radical feminist lesbians in 1977, still supports a garden, restaurant, bookstore, and regular revisions of a cookbook, in which the authors declare, "eating meat is wrong for its cruelty to creatures who can feel and experience pain, and wrong because it contributes to worldwide starvation, mostly of women and children."<sup>25</sup>

Radical and spiritual feminists alike pointed to the culturally constructed connections between women and animals that predate patriarchal history: in the art and sculpture of many Neolithic earth-based cultures, women and animals were depicted together as divine beings associated with the earth's cycles and its fertility.<sup>26</sup> The Great Goddess was herself an animal—all the animals—and the regeneration of the earth each spring was associated with women's fertility and celebrated in great festivals of spiritual and sexual exuberance.<sup>27</sup> With the advent of patriarchal cultures and religions, the symbols and beliefs of the earth-based, woman-centered cultures had to be demonized in order to justify their displacement. Accordingly, in the book of Genesis, it is a woman, a tree, and an animal that are blamed for the Fall of Man. For the past two thousand years, women, animals, nature, and people of color have become conceptually associated in Western patriarchal thought, and it is their culturally constructed "closeness to nature" as well as their supposed lack of reason that authorizes and reinforces their subordination.<sup>28</sup> Yet observing the associations between women and animals in both goddess cultures and in patriarchal thought did not automatically lead feminists to become advocates for animal liberation. The works of radical or spiritual feminists such as Susan Griffin, Starhawk, Riane Eisler, and Charlene Spretnak do not advocate either vegetarianism or animal liberation, though they acknowledge the historic association of women, animals, and nature.<sup>29</sup>

This woman-animals-nature association is traced poetically in Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature* (1978), a work of radical feminism that greatly influenced the radical and vegetarian branches of ecofeminism, though the book is not identified as an ecofeminist text because Griffin herself did not embrace the term until over a decade later.<sup>30</sup> Like Griffin's *Woman and Nature*, Andrée Collard and Joyce Contrucci's *Rape of the Wild* (1989) also places the oppression of animals as central to western patriarchy's oppression of women and nature, but Collard and Contrucci described their perspective as "biophilic" rather than "ecofeminist"; it was the radical feminist Mary Daly who described the text as "ecofeminist" in the book's foreword. A third text that did

not explicitly use the term “ecofeminism,” Elizabeth Dodson Gray’s *Green Paradise Lost* (1979), articulates—in popular, accessible terms—many of the central insights of ecofeminism that would later be more fully developed in ecofeminist theory. Those insights include: the concept of hierarchical thinking, “a perception of diversity which is so organized by a spatial metaphor (Up-and-Down) that greater value is always attributed to that which is higher”; the critique of “Mother” nature as a metaphor authorizing humanity’s limitless consumption of nature; the heterosexualization of the culture-nature relationship as a key to the domination of nature; the interconnected self of ecofeminism; the centrality of race and class to an ecofeminist analysis; the possibility, significance, and necessity of our erotic reconnection with other parts of nature; and, throughout the book, the oppression of animals as equally significant to other forms of oppression, and the need to transform hierarchy and domination through the liberation of all subordinated Others.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, vegetarian feminists have argued for the moral treatment of non-human animals on the basis of sympathy; on the conceptual linkages among sexism, racism, and speciesism; on the recognition of flesh-eating as a form of patriarchal domination; and on the basis of the culturally constructed associations among women, animals, people of color, and nature that are used to subordinate these groups in Western patriarchal thought. Clearly vegetarian feminism provides the strongest conceptual basis for vegetarian ecofeminism. The distinctive difference between the two can be seen in terms of an analytical shift, from examining connections among the various objects of oppression (that is, among women, people of color, nonheterosexuals, the South, nonhuman animals, nature) to the very structure of oppression itself.

### *From Objects of Oppression to the Structures of Oppression: Shifting Analyses*

Broadly speaking, ecofeminist theory has developed its analyses from initial insights linking various objects of oppression to an analysis of the structure and functioning of oppression itself. Yet structural analyses of oppression have been present from the start of both feminist and ecofeminist theories. In the development of theory, there is not merely a linear progression but more specifically a dialectical relationship between these two analytical approaches. The process of recognizing the various objects of oppression (women, people of color, workers, queers, nonhuman animals, nature, the Third World or the South), the systems of oppression (sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, speciesism, anthropocentrism or naturism, colonialism), and the way those systems are interlinked is a process that describes the history and development of most feminisms and ecofeminisms.

For example one of the most significant theorists of vegetarian ecofemi-

nism, Carol Adams, articulated the connection between sexism and speciesism in “The Oedible Complex: Feminism and Vegetarianism” (1975) and in *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (1990). Both subtitles indicate Adams’s initial theoretical stance, positioned midway between feminism and animal liberation theories, and draw correlations between sexism and speciesism by observing the linked conceptual associations between women and animals in Western culture. As her analysis shifted from the objects of oppression to the structure of oppression, Adams chose to refer to and build upon the analyses of ecofeminism, as can be seen in her later work.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the philosophical framework for ecofeminism was first built on the conceptual connections between women and nature in Western cultures as can be seen in the title and contents of Karen Warren’s classic essay, “Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections” (1987).<sup>33</sup> The convergence of feminist-vegetarianism and ecofeminism, as if following a simple algebraic operation, combined the equation “ecofeminism = women + nature” with “women + animals,” and appeared in the first text of vegetarian ecofeminism in my *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*. But the book was more inclusive than the sum of its parts, for of the volume’s twelve essays, three essays focused specifically on matters of race, class, and culture; four essays focused on the problem of speciesism and its implications for ecofeminism; and five essays addressed aspects of ecofeminist theory generally. From the start, vegetarian ecofeminists were intent on showing that consideration of species was an integral component of ecofeminist analysis, along with race, class, gender, and nature, and that the inclusion of nonhuman animals had the potential to transform the shape of ecofeminist theory.

Naming speciesism as an additional and explicit category of analysis was necessary because the problem of species oppression was not included in ecofeminism’s concept of nature, as vegetarian ecofeminists discovered.<sup>34</sup> Certainly, feminism’s ability to recognize and respond to such exclusions has been a powerful force for transformation in both feminist and ecofeminist theories. Feminism’s commitment to inclusiveness has meant (ideally) that when a disenfranchised group is recognized, responding to and including the concerns of that group subsequently influences the shape of feminist theory. It is through this process of increasing inclusivity and subsequent theoretical transformation that the development of feminism, ecofeminism, and vegetarian ecofeminism may be traced.

Ecofeminism’s philosophical foundation was originally developed as a response to the exclusions and the inadequacies of feminism. Warren’s “Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections” argues that “if eco-feminism is true or at least plausible, then each of the four leading versions of feminism is in-

adequate, incomplete, or problematic.”<sup>35</sup> To support her argument, Warren first explains the four minimal claims of ecofeminism:

- (i) there are important connections between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature;
- (ii) understanding the nature of these connections is necessary to any adequate understanding of the oppression of women and the oppression of nature;
- (iii) feminist theory and practice must include an ecological perspective; and
- (iv) solutions to ecological problems must include a feminist perspective.<sup>36</sup>

To illuminate these claims Warren explores the *value-hierarchical thinking* (a hierarchical perception of diversity), its *logic of domination* that “explains, justifies, and maintains the subordination of an ‘inferior’ group by a ‘superior’ group on the grounds of the (alleged) inferiority or superiority of the respective group,” and the *normative dualisms* that together characterize a *patriarchal conceptual framework*. Warren uses this critique to show that racism, sexism, classism, and naturism are the “four interlocking pillars upon which the structure of patriarchy rests.” But the four “leading” versions of feminism—liberal, radical, Marxist, socialist—do not offer adequate analyses of the connections between the oppression of women and of nature, as Warren demonstrates. Instead what is needed is a “transformative feminism,” one that moves feminism beyond its traditional conception as “the movement to end women’s oppression” and responds to the analyses of many black feminists and Third World feminists who argue that “because of the basic connections between sexist oppression and other forms of systematized oppression, feminism, properly understood, is a movement to end *all* forms of oppression.” Warren’s essay positions ecofeminism as a more inclusive articulation of feminism that is actually a fulfillment of feminism’s transformative “power and promise.”<sup>37</sup>

Warren’s description of the role that normative dualisms play in the logic of domination has been echoed in the analyses of vegetarian ecofeminists who observe that the human/nonhuman animal dualism functions in ways that parallel the culture/nature, reason/emotion, and masculine/feminine dualisms. Barbara Noske observes that because “feminists have uncritically embraced the subject-object division between humans and animals,” their analysis fails to recognize the fact that “sexist biases do not stop at the human-animal border . . . female and male stereotypes [carry] over into the world of animals.”<sup>38</sup> According to Lynda Birke, “the human/animal distinction rests on a notion of ‘animal nature’ that is overgeneralising, and untenable,” simply because “there is no one animal nature against which we can compare our won-

derful [human] achievements.” Examining feminist critiques of science, Birke finds “arguably the most central contradiction in feminist thinking about science and animals is how a critical discourse that celebrates difference and fracturing of simple dichotomies rests firmly and unquestioningly on such a dichotomy.”<sup>39</sup>

Just as ecofeminism began its conceptual work as a response to the inadequacies of feminist theory, vegetarian ecofeminism was born out of a recognition of the inadequacies of feminist and ecofeminist analyses. Originally conceiving of speciesism as integral to an ecofeminist analysis rather than as a separate branch of ecofeminism, Lori Gruen and I (1993) developed an ecofeminist perspective on industrial animal production by looking at this institution through the lenses of various liberatory theories, evaluating the strengths and shortcomings of these theories in terms of their abilities to recognize multiple forms of oppression, again based on the feminist insight that the best theory will be the most inclusive. A liberal feminist perspective on industrial animal production would focus on the inequitable distribution of animal protein and the effect such a distribution would have on women’s lives, whereas a socialist feminist perspective would focus on the patriarchal capitalist nature of animal production, the race and class of those working in the industry, and the socioeconomic status of the industry’s consumers. Environmentalists would emphasize the environmentally destructive processes of industrialized food production, which requires massive amounts of energy, water, and grazing land, and produces large quantities of waste. A Third World analysis of industrial animal production would reveal the ways this practice contributes to the North’s overconsumption, exacerbating the problems of world hunger, deforestation, and economic colonization. Finally, an animal liberation perspective would suggest that the practice of industrial animal production is itself a form of oppression in that the animals themselves are made to suffer and die, and their most basic needs and interests are ignored. Noting that these analyses are complementary and not mutually exclusive, we argue that an ecofeminist perspective views “all of the various forms of oppression as central to an understanding of particular institutions,” and that the case of industrial animal production clearly reveals what Warren has called the “logic of domination” as it affects animals, workers, the South, women, and nature.<sup>40</sup>

Excluding or omitting the oppression of animals from feminist and ecofeminist analyses, vegetarian ecofeminists have argued, is inconsistent with the activist and philosophical foundations of both feminism (as a “movement to end all forms of oppression”) and ecofeminism (as an analysis that critiques value-hierarchical thought, the logic of domination, and normative dualisms). In her study of “‘Mad Cow’ Disease and the Animal Industrial Complex,” Carol



Adams uses and expands Warren's four minimal claims of ecofeminism to show that animals must be included in an ecofeminist critique if ecofeminism is to provide an accurate description of "*all* forms of oppression" inherent in the Mad Cow crisis. By exposing the sexual politics of beef in the association of meat-eating with colonial masculinity, along with the sexual politics of dairy as inherent in the exploitation and devaluation of the female's reproductive labor, Adams argues that important connections exist not just between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature, but also between the oppression of women and the oppression of other animal species. Warren's three-fold definition of a patriarchal conceptual framework (value-hierarchical thinking, a logic of domination, normative dualisms) describes not just racism, sexism, classism, and naturism, but also speciesism, for the human–non-human animal dualism exemplifies not only a value hierarchy (with humans "up" and nonhuman animals "down") but also a logic of domination (justifying the superiority of humans and the subordination of nonhuman animals). Then observing socialist feminism's intellectual indebtedness to Marxism, Adams also builds on Barbara Noske's work, which "draws parallels between factory animals and human industrial workers without simply equating them," but by using "the four interrelated aspects of alienation Marx identified as functioning under the capitalist mode of production to illustrate her points."<sup>41</sup> According to Noske, both workers and factory animals are alienated from the products of their work, which for factory animals includes their offspring, their bodily fluids (milk, semen), and their own bodies as well; they are both alienated from their own productive activity, forced to specialize in one "skill" (milk production) to the elimination of all others; and they are alienated from surrounding nature and from social and species life.<sup>42</sup> Based on the structural similarities between classism and speciesism, sexism and speciesism, and each of these with the logic of domination that rationalizes the subordination of nature, Adams concludes that feminist theory and practice must include not just an ecological perspective, but also an ecological perspective that includes animals.

Vegetarian ecofeminists have demonstrated that speciesism is a form of oppression paralleling and reinforcing other forms of oppression, an argument that has become further refined through the use of Iris Young's five-fold definition of oppression.<sup>43</sup> Oppression, according to Young, is a condition of groups, and though Young's analysis is developed in terms of human groups, both Gruen and Ronnie Zoe Hawkins demonstrate how this analysis describes the oppression of nonhuman animals as well.<sup>44</sup> In "The Five Faces of Oppression," Young defines five conditions—exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence—any one of which is enough to consider



those experiencing it to be oppressed. Exploitation, according to Young, “consists in social processes that bring about a transfer of energies from one group to another to produce unequal distributions,” and surely the labor of wild and domestic nonhuman animals, their reproduction and their bodies as well have been exploited by humans.<sup>45</sup> “Intensively reared dairy cows are so overworked that they begin to metabolize their own muscle in order to continue to produce milk, a process referred to in the industry as ‘milking off their backs,’” writes Gruen, while sows are confined their entire lives and “repeatedly artificially inseminated so as to produce pigs for consumption.”<sup>46</sup> The injustice of marginalization creates a sense of uselessness, boredom, and lack of self-respect, phenomena that are typical of animals confined in zoos. Animals also experience powerlessness, as do most other nonhuman animals who are “powerless at the hands of humans, who hold life-or-death decision-making power over them on multiple levels.”<sup>47</sup> Cultural imperialism, as defined by Young, means experiencing “how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one’s own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one’s group and mark it out as the Other.”<sup>48</sup> As Gruen explains, the condition of domesticated “pets” is one in which “animals are forced to conform to the rituals and practices of the humans. . . . Cats and dogs are often denied full expression of their natural urges,” which include mating, eating, hunting, excreting, exercising, and communicating with other animals.<sup>49</sup> Finally, violence clearly applies to humans’ relationships with nonhumans, through such institutions as factory farming, hunting, and experimentation. While any one of these experiences would be sufficient to indicate a group’s status as oppressed, according to Young, nonhuman animals experience all five aspects of oppression.

Thus, vegetarian ecofeminists have used a variety of feminist structural analyses to show that speciesism is integral to both feminist and ecofeminist theories. They cite the human/nonhuman animal dualism as a normative dualism, the value-hierarchical thinking and logic of domination inherent in speciesism, the alienated labor required of factory animals, the applicability of Young’s five-fold analysis of oppression for nonhuman animals, Frye’s use of the birdcage to describe human and nonhuman animal oppression, Plumwood’s Master Model and the five operations of dualistic thought that inhere in the human/nonhuman animal dualism to support their critique. Moreover, vegetarian ecofeminists have argued that associations among oppressed groups further legitimate their subordination. For example, the association of African Americans with animals has been used to legitimate enslaving both groups, the association of women with animals was used as an additional factor in legitimating three centuries of witch burnings, and the association of indigenous

people with animal sexuality was used to legitimate colonialism.<sup>50</sup> As vegetarian ecofeminists have argued, speciesism is a form of oppression that is interlinked with and reinforces other forms of oppression such as racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and the destruction of the natural world. Excluding the oppression of nonhuman animals from feminist and ecofeminist analyses can only give us analyses that are, at best, incomplete.

#### CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENTS

Vegetarian ecofeminists have also contributed to the conceptual development of ecofeminist theory more broadly by introducing several theoretical concepts that illuminate human-nature relations: the truncated narrative, the critique of holism, the absent referent, the mass term, and contextual moral vegetarianism.

##### *The Truncated Narrative and the Critique of Holism*

Marti Kheel's concept of the truncated narrative urges ecofeminists to look for the whole story behind what appear to be mutually exclusive ethical choices: choices between human survival and animal welfare, for example, as in the arguments for animal experimentation. Kheel suggests that we must understand the worldview that produced the ethical dilemma and thereby discover a way that such a crisis could be prevented. "Our moral conduct cannot be understood apart from the context (or moral soil) in which it grows," contends Kheel. Kheel also critiques both the tendency of deep ecologists to value the ecological "whole" over the specific part or individual and the tendency of animal liberationists to value the individual over the whole. Emphasizing the ecological concept of interconnectedness, Kheel argues that ethical decisions must consider both the interests of the individual and the community as interrelated. She reminds us that while a preference for the "whole" may seem more rational, our emotional relations and concerns are usually built on the strength of individual ties, and that both reason and emotion must be considered in making ethical decisions. In each of these arguments, Kheel rejects the "heroic" ethics of patriarchy and recommends a more holistic ethics that is ecofeminism.<sup>51</sup>

##### *The Absent Referent and the Mass Term*

Perhaps vegetarian ecofeminists are best known for their critiques of animal food production/consumption and of hunting. Using animals as food has

been critiqued most notably through Adams's concepts of the "absent referent" and the "mass term," and Deane Curtin's theory of "contextual moral vegetarianism." According to Adams, when living animals are made into meat and other commodities, the language itself contributes to the animal's absence. "Live animals are thus the absent referents in the concept of meat," Adams argues. "The absent referent permits us to forget about the animal as an independent entity; it also enables us to resist efforts to make animals present." When living animals are turned into meat or other commodities, Adams continues, "someone who has a very particular, situated life, a unique being, is converted into something that has no distinctiveness, no uniqueness, no individuality." Thus, "meat" is a mass term because no matter how great the quantity, meat is still meat. It is the concept of the mass term that allows people to think that they can eat a hamburger steak and that cows still exist. "But if you have a living cow in front of you," as Adams explains, "and you kill that cow, and butcher that cow, and grind up her flesh, you have not added a mass term to a mass term and ended up with more of the same."<sup>52</sup> The phenomenon of the mass term allows people to generalize that concept to apply to an entire species or group while simultaneously overlooking the needs and interests of individual members of that species.

### *Contextual Moral Vegetarianism*

Deane Curtin's theory of contextual moral vegetarianism shares with Kheel the emphasis on context that is a significant characteristic of ecofeminist ethics. Acknowledging that "the reasons for moral vegetarianism may differ by locale, by gender, as well as by class," Curtin concludes that he "cannot refer to an absolute moral rule that prohibits meat eating under all circumstances." To feed his child if he were starving, or to protect a loved one from an assault, Curtin speculates that he would kill if such killing were unavoidable. But when there is a choice, then the decision becomes not a matter of self-defense or personal survival, but one of ethics. Curtin argues that "the injunction to care, considered as an issue of moral and political development, should be understood to include the injunction to eliminate needless suffering wherever possible, and particularly the suffering of those whose suffering is conceptually connected to one's own." Curtin's contextual moral vegetarianism acknowledges that it is not possible to eliminate violence and suffering from the world completely because "to live is to commit violence." Contextual moral vegetarianism is not a static, universal, or absolute moral state, but rather a dynamic moral direction. Acknowledging that some cultures "have cultural rituals that mediate the moral burden of killing and inflicting pain for food," Curtin nonetheless

avoids arguments that would legitimate treating animals as food as a choice that is “morally justifiable in exotic cultures, or in the ‘Third World,’ or in extreme contexts” and restricts his analysis to Western, industrialized countries, where animal foods articulate these cultures’ “alienation from and dominance over other beings.” Moral vegetarianism is best understood “as a response to a particular context, to specific culturally embedded practices.”<sup>53</sup> Curtin’s theory offers a good beginning for an ecofeminist approach to exploring dietary ethics cross-culturally, though he leaves this task for others to pursue.

The importance of context and cultural sensitivity in relation to dietary choices has been emphasized by other feminist vegetarians and vegetarian ecofeminists. Noting that the traditional diets of many nondominant cultures have been primarily vegetarian, vegetarian feminists and ecofeminists have been nonetheless careful to build their theories in ways that are not culturally imperialist. As feminist vegetarian Jane Meyerding has observed, “symbols—such as food—of cultural identity and unity are much less important for people in the ‘majority’ culture,” but may take on greater importance to people from marginalized cultures. At the same time, Meyerding argues, “it is an overwhelming contradiction for feminists to buy the products of, and thus support, the mass torture system of factory farming,” just as it is a contradiction for feminists to buy the products of sweatshop laborers.<sup>54</sup> Vegetarian ecofeminist Carol Adams advances this argument by examining the Ecofeminist Task Force Recommendation to the 1990 National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA) conference, which had urged that all future NWSA conferences serve only vegetarian meals, and points out the different historical contexts in which animals have been produced for food: According to Adams, “flesh obtained from mass-produced, warehoused, terminal animals” is a part of no one’s cultural tradition. Moreover, the foods offered at most conferences “already ignore ethnic and racial traditions around food” and represent the dominant culture: food choices are always already political, cultural, and ecological choices.<sup>55</sup> The question is whether and how to make these food choices more consciously, coherently, and contextually. Like Meyerding, Adams notes that most cultural traditions have oppressive practices that feminist inheritors of those traditions may choose to change; the important element here is that the cultural insiders are the ones who make the choices.

#### THEORETICAL APPLICATIONS OF VEGETARIAN ECOFEMINISM

Vegetarian ecofeminists have developed critiques and activist strategies for responding to various situations involving the linked oppression of women, people of color, and nonhuman animals; here, I will limit the discussion to the

specific examples of hunting, battering, and the problem of racism, sexism, and speciesism in science and technology.

### *Hunting*

The most fully developed vegetarian ecofeminist critique of hunting may be found in Kheel's work, which distinguishes among six different types of North American hunters based on the types of arguments advanced to explain or to justify animal hunting. Prior to the emergence of the environmental movement, three types of justifications predominated among the rationales given by white hunters: the "hired hunter" killed animals for commercial profit, the "hungry hunter" killed for the sake of food, and the "hostile hunter" killed to eradicate "villainous" animals. Within environmental literature, three additional types of hunters emerge: the "happy hunter," who hunts for enjoyment and character development (which Kheel classifies as psychological need); the "holist hunter," who hunts to maintain the balance of nature (ecological need); and the "holy hunter," who hunts in order to attain a spiritual state (religious need). As Kheel's analysis reveals, none of these six types of hunters considers the needs or interests of the animals; instead, their arguments remain self-absorbed and self-interested, projecting onto the animals the attitudes and desires that best serve the hunter.<sup>56</sup> Kheel criticizes deep ecologists and other environmentalists for a form of cultural essentialism, and for borrowing convenient aspects of Native cultures that seem to legitimate hunting:

These writers single out hunting as the activity with the greatest instructive value. Although native cultures engaged in myriad other practices (e.g., gathering, planting, cooking, weaving, singing, dancing), no other activity is seen to have the same moral relevance. Most of these environmental writers also ignore the vast cultural differences that existed among tribal people, referring to them as if they were a monolithic block. But not all Native Americans hunted and not all showed "respect" for the animals they killed.<sup>57</sup>

Kheel's concept of the truncated narrative explains how it is that white environmentalists believe they can import selected aspects of native cultures to legitimate their own actions. In particular, "holy hunters" have uprooted the notion of the animal's death as a willing "gift" from the context of Native cultures. Though Kheel's analysis is focused on hunting among Euramerican environmentalists, she acknowledges that Native Americans appear to constitute the "prototypical example of the hungry hunter" in that those who did hunt were

subsistence hunters; moreover, Native Americans differ from the holy hunters in that “they do not appear to be endorsing the virtues of hunting as an activity in and of itself.”<sup>58</sup> Kheel’s analysis leaves aside those who hunt for survival and focuses instead on those who hunt out of desire, but not because they cannot survive without killing and eating animals.

Luke has also examined the phenomenon of contemporary hunting by Euroamerican men, uncovering the internal contradictions within hunting ethics and the erotic heterosexualization of the hunt. In his critique of the “Sportsman’s Code,” Luke argues that, in fact, several of its rules require a respect for animal life to such an extent that the proscriptions indicate hunting is morally prohibited by the code itself. Noting that most hunters attempt to legitimate their actions by arguing that “nature is violent,” Luke counters that “sometimes it is peaceful and symbiotic” as well.<sup>59</sup> “It makes no sense,” Luke observes, “to suggest that because some bloodshed in nature is inescapable, we might as well just wade right in and *add* to it.” Luke also deconstructs contemporary hunters’ claims to “love” the animals they kill, noting that such claims define “love” as “the desire to possess those creatures who interest or excite the hunter. Taking possession typically entails killing the animal, eating the flesh, and mounting the head or the entire body”—a sharp contrast against love that involves reciprocity and mutuality between the lover and the beloved. Using direct quotes from hunters such as Ted Kerasote, James Swan, Jose Ortega y Gasset, Robert Wegner, Ted Nugent, and Paul Shepard, Luke demonstrates the ways that, in the hunting culture of North American white men, hunting is constructed as a form of “predatory heterosexuality” in which “the weapon becomes an extension of the hunter’s body and thereby the means by which he penetrates animal bodies.” Citing numerous examples of “cross-talk between hunting and heterosexuality,” Luke underscores the fact that “both institutions eroticize power difference” and “a predational sexuality between women and men.” The eroticization of domination is further intensified across power imbalances of racial difference. Using images from the 1995 swimsuit edition of *Sports Illustrated*, Luke argues that the photographs of women in “animal-print bikinis representing species men kill and collect (leopard, tiger, cheetah, lion, zebra, and butterfly),” posed in natural settings combining “water, sand, rocks, trees, and animals” effectively “market Costa Rica and South Africa as alluring vacation spots, places which cater to white men in their desires to shoot exotic wild animals and/or have sex with fascinating foreign women.” Luke contextualizes these photos within the history of colonization to show that “the exploitation of global economic inequalities turns Third World lands into game preserves serving an international clientele,” and “the

bodies of indigenous animals, women, and children become available to affluent foreign men for sexualized domination and penetration.”<sup>60</sup>

### *Battering*

Using information from various handbooks for battered women, Adams has found that “behaviors that are commonly shared among batterers include hunting, owning of guns, threatening, harming, or killing a pet.” Adams’s research and activism in both the battered women’s movement and the animal rights movement led her to investigate a phenomenon that is familiar to many domestic violence activists, the frequent co-occurrence of violence against women with violence against animals. Survivors of abuse and their advocates report two significant ways that batterers harm women, children, and animals: through a threat or actual killing of an animal, and through the use of animals in sexually violating women or children. Moreover children who are sexually abused themselves may later abuse animals, and in their late teens and early adulthood go on to rape, mutilate, and murder. The linkage between harm to women and harm to animals in abusive relationships is an important insight for feminists, Adams shows, because “it exposes the deliberateness of battering, its control rather than loss of control.” It is one thing for a batterer to say “I lost control and punched her,” but this facade of lost control is much harder to maintain when a batterer reports, “I ‘lost’ control and then cut the dog’s head off and then nailed it to the porch.” Violence against animals is used as part of an overall strategy for domination and control in abusive relationships and is part of Western culture’s somatophobia (“hostility to the body”) that is symptomatic of sexism, racism, classism, and speciesism. “The problem is not only that women are equated with animals’ bodies,” Adams explains, “but also that animals are equated with their bodies.”<sup>61</sup> Failure to recognize and respond to this connection results not only in incomplete theorizing, but in ineffective activism as well. Many women will stay in or return to abusive relationships as a way of protecting companion animals, since most shelters for battered women do not provide accommodations for pets. Providing shelter for women and their companion animals so that both may safely leave an abusive relationship has been one of several activist projects of Feminists for Animal Rights, developed in conjunction with Adams’s research.

### *Racism, Sexism, and Speciesism in Science and Technology*

Vegetarian ecofeminists have also revealed the interconnections among racism, sexism, and speciesism by examining matters of population and fertility

control, and the power relations inherent in scientific experimentation. Ecofeminists and vegetarian ecofeminists alike have provided a critique of population policies and technologies, and the way these are used to oppress women of color, poor women, and rural women both in the United States and internationally. Safe and effective reproductive technologies are readily available to manage or to enhance the fertility of wealthy, white, and First World women, while in the Third World reproductive technologies (often of questionable safety, as in the use of Depo Provera and Norplant) are geared to controlling the fertility of poor women and women of color.<sup>62</sup> Vegetarian ecofeminists have also examined the ways that the reproduction of female factory animals is controlled through such examples as egg overproduction and the confinement of hens, and recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH) and the overproduction of milk in factory farmed cows.<sup>63</sup> Pointing to the similarities between the conceptual structure that authorizes these differential responses of fertility enhancement and population control, rather than between the women and animals, vegetarian ecofeminists have argued that these technologies violate the reproductive autonomy of marginalized females, both human and nonhuman; subordinate or restrict the identity of females to their reproductive capacities; and articulate the superiority of “rational” science and technology over the “irrational” and “mindless” reproduction of female bodies.

The scientific acceptability of animal experimentation has provided authorization for experimentation on humans who have been ontologized as “lower than domestic animals,” as “rodents, reptiles, insects, and germs.”<sup>64</sup> Many environmentalists and vegetarians alike have been troubled by claims that in Nazi Germany opposition to hunting, a love for nature and for animals, and the belief that “civilization could be regenerated through vegetarianism” coexisted with antisemitism and mass genocide.<sup>65</sup> But there is no logical connection among environmentalism, animal liberation, and racism; liberation and oppression are antithetical. The Nazi movement did not “obliterate” moral distinctions between humans and animals, but rather shifted the lines of these distinctions, maintaining but redefining the normative dualisms and logic of domination in Nazi culture, so that it was “possible to treat [some pet] animals as considerately as [some] humans and [some] humans as poorly as [most] animals.” Refraining from hunting or eating nonhuman animals “allowed Nazis to ‘double,’ seeing themselves as humane while behaving insensitively or cruelly toward humans.”<sup>66</sup> Sexism, racism, and speciesism can be clearly seen in the juxtaposition of the Nazi plans to develop state-run brothels, where young women certified as genetically sound would be impregnated by Nazi men (thereby breeding Aryans as if they were pedigreed dogs), while at the same time conceptualizing Polish and Jewish concentration camp inmates as if



they were as expendable as laboratory rats. These concentration camp inmates were substituted for animals, using the same logic that authorizes the testing of fertility drugs on poor women and women in the Third World, and the testing of household cleaning products on animals in the United States. It is a logic of domination based on a sense of self that is separate from the natural world, from “inferior” human others, from feelings, from sexuality, from the body itself—an identity clearly defined in Plumwood’s concept of the Master Model—that undermines activism for social and ecological justice. Such logic may well threaten the continued viability of life on earth.

#### VEGETARIAN ECOFEMINISM: DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

From its roots in the experience of sympathy for nonhuman animals, decades of activism and thought in feminism and animal liberation, and the counter-cultural movements of the 1960s and 1970s, vegetarian ecofeminism has grown and contributed to the broader development of a more inclusive ecofeminism. Its analyses—and the critiques of its analyses—indicate several directions for the future.

First, to what extent is the analysis of “speciesism” relevant to non-Western cultures? Are there potential connections between cultural vegetarianism and vegetarian ecofeminism that have yet to be theorized? Feminists and ecofeminists alike are now exploring the strategies and the boundaries for cross-cultural feminist ethics. Non-Western feminists are evaluating their own cultural traditions in terms of gender justice and developing their own feminist ethics. Will these feminists find links between the oppression of women, slaves, and nonhuman animals in their cultural traditions? Certainly those cultures with traditions of hunting, killing, and consuming or offering for sacrifice other humans as well as nonhuman animals cannot be said to be speciesist in the same way that cultures who reserved these activities for those outside their species. The cross-cultural relevance of vegetarian ecofeminism has yet to be explored.

Second, it is imperative that ecofeminists address the problem of heterosexism, racism, and classism, both within our movements and within the larger culture. Already this discussion has begun within ecofeminism, but it needs further development. Some vegetarian ecofeminists have been inspired to address speciesism from their own oppression as lesbians and bisexual women and have begun to make connections between the animalization of homosexuals and people of color with the oppressive structures of speciesism and heterosexism. More work needs to be done to keep race, class, and species at the foreground of ecofeminist discourse, equal in consideration with gender and nature.

Finally, as vegetarian ecofeminists explore the relevance of speciesism cross-culturally, some will want to build or strengthen alliances with women activists in the environmental justice movement. These alliances may raise the question of contextual moral vegetarianism as these activists share work and meals. While leadership in addressing these questions may seem to fall to those vegetarian women of color who are willing to speak out, omnivorous environmental justice activists and vegetarian ecofeminists will also need to engage each other in critical dialogue. Only through such democratic dialogues will a more inclusive, liberatory movement be possible, one that strives for justice on behalf of diverse humans, animals, and all life on earth.

#### NOTES

1. Lynda Birke, "Exploring the Boundaries: Feminism, Animals, and Science," in *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, ed. Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 33.

2. Léonie Caldecott and Stephanie Leland, eds., *Reclaim the Earth: Women Speak Out for Life on Earth* (London: Women's Press, 1983); Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein, eds., *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990); and Greta Gaard, ed., *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature* (Philadelphia PA: Temple University Press, 1993).

3. Brian Luke, "Justice, Caring, and Animal Liberation," in Adams and Donovan, *Animals and Women*, 81–82.

4. Luke, "Justice, Caring, and Animal Liberation," 86–87.

5. Carol Adams, "Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals," *Hypatia* 6, no. 1 (1991): 134, and *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum, 1990); and Val Plumwood, "Human Vulnerability and the Experience of Being Prey," *Quadrant*, March 1995, 29–34.

Lori Gruen has provided an important critique of the widespread use of the rape metaphor in ecofeminist literature. As Gruen explains,

"The trauma of rape reaches far beyond the physical assault. Women who are raped have to live with the memory and often re-live the terror for the rest of their lives. Being killed (in the case of animals) or destroyed (in the case of natural objects) is very different from being raped (in the case of women)."

In the case of actual rather than metaphoric rape, "the target of the violation is a sentient, feeling individual who continues to be sentient and feeling after the attack; she is an individual who often must struggle with anger, fear, doubt, and a host of other emotions which require much energy to be dealt with effectively" (Gruen, "Thoughts on Exclusion and Difference: A Response to 'On Women, Animals and Nature,'" *Ameri-*

can Philosophical Association Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy 91, no. 1 [1992]: 78–81). In the case of metaphoric rape—the clear-cutting of a forest or the slaughter of an animal—the post-traumatic ramifications are not suffered by the victims themselves.

6. Josephine Donovan, “Attention to Suffering: Sympathy as a Basis for Ethical Treatment of Animals,” in *Beyond Animal Rights: A Feminist Caring Ethic for the Treatment of Animals*, ed. Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams (New York: Continuum 1996), 147–69.

7. Carol Adams, “Caring about Suffering: A Feminist Exploration,” in Donovan and Adams, *Beyond Animal Rights*, 184, 187.

8. Donovan, “Attention to Suffering,” 165.

9. Brian Luke, “Taming Ourselves or Going Feral? Toward a Nonpatriarchal Metaethic of Animal Liberation,” in Adams and Donovan, *Animals and Women*, 312.

10. Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals* (New York: Avon Books, 1975); and Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). Other significant animal rights theorists include Gary Varner, Evelyn Pluhar, Mary Midgley, and James Mason.

11. Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 8.

12. Lori Gruen, “Animals,” in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer (Cambridge MA: Blackwell Reference, 1991), 351.

13. Luke, “Justice, Caring, and Animal Liberation,” 79, 81.

14. Gruen, “Animals,” 351.

15. John Robbins, *Diet for a New America* (Walpole NH: Stillpoint Publishing, 1987), 353, 352.

16. Peter Singer, “Becoming a Vegetarian,” in *Cooking, Eating, Thinking: Transformative Philosophies of Food*, ed. Deane Curtin and Lisa Heldke (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 178, 179.

17. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 148.

18. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 215 n.18.

19. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 215 n.18.

20. Francis Moore Lappé, *Diet for a Small Planet* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), 69–71, 161; and Adams, “Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals,” 129.

21. Josephine Donovan, “Animal Rights and Feminist Theory,” in Gaard, *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, 167–94.

22. Constantia Salamone, “Feminist as Rapist in the Modern Male Hunter Culture,” *Majority Report: The Women’s Newspaper*, October 1973, n.p., and, “The Prevalence of the Natural Law within Women: Women and Animal Rights,” in *Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence*, ed. Pam McAllister (Philadelphia PA: New Society Publishers, 1982), 364–67; Carol J. Adams, “The Oedible Complex,” in *The Lesbian Reader*, ed. Gina Covina and Laurel Galana (Berkeley CA: Amazon Press, 1975);

Laurel Holliday, *The Violent Sex: Male Psychobiology and the Evolution of Consciousness* (Guerneville CA: Bluestocking Books, 1978); Marti Kheel, "Animal Liberation is a Feminist Issue," *The New Catalyst Quarterly* 10 (winter 1987/88): 8–9; Aviva Cantor, "The Club, The Yoke, and the Leash: What We Can Learn from the Way a Culture Treats Animals," *Ms.*, August 1983, 27–29; and Gena Corea, "Dominance and Control: How Our Culture Sees Women, Nature and Animals," *The Animals' Agenda* 4 (May/June 1984): 20–21, 37.

23. Marjorie Spiegel, *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery* (Philadelphia PA: New Society Publishers, 1988).

24. Elizabeth Gould Davis, *The First Sex* (New York: Putnam, 1971).

25. Bloodroot Collective, *The Perennial Political Palate: The Third Feminist Vegetarian Cookbook* (Bridgeport CT: Sanguinaria Publishing, 1993), 3.

26. Andrée Collard with Joyce Contrucci, *Rape of the Wild: Man's Violence Against Animals and the Earth* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

27. Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and The Blade: Our History, Our Future* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1987); and Monica Sjöö and Barbara Mor, *The Great Cosmic Mother: Rediscovering the Religion of the Earth* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

28. Elizabeth Dodson Gray, *Green Paradise Lost* (Wellesley MA: Roundtable Press, 1981); and Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

29. Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978); Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex, & Politics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982), and "Power, Authority, and Mystery: Ecofeminism and Earth-based Spirituality," in Diamond and Orenstein, *Reweaving the World*, 73–86; Eisler, *The Chalice and The Blade*; and Charlene Spretnak, "Ecofeminism: Our Roots and Flowering," in Diamond and Orenstein, *Reweaving the World*, 3–14, and "Earth-body and Personal Body as Sacred," in *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*, ed. Carol J. Adams (New York: Continuum, 1993), 261–80.

30. See David Macauley, "On Women, Animals and Nature: An Interview with Ecofeminist Susan Griffin," *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy* 90, no. 3 (1991): 121.

31. See Gray, *Green Paradise Lost*, 20, 27–42, 40–42, 79–85, 131–40, 92–97.

32. See Carol Adams, "Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals," *Neither Man nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of Animals* (New York: Continuum, 1994), "Woman-Battering and Harm to Animals," in Adams and Donovan, *Animals and Women*, 55–84, and "Caring About Suffering," in Adams and Donovan, *Beyond Animal Rights*, 170–96.

33. Karen Warren, "Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections," *Environmental Ethics* 9, no. 1 (1987): 3–20.

34. Nor was sexuality included in the category of gender, and it also had to be named explicitly (see Greta Gaard, "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism," *Hypatia* 12, no. 1 [1997]: 114–37). Some ecofeminists have argued that race and class, though named and included, still do not feature as prominently in ecofeminist analyses as do gender and nature. Exclusions such as these illustrate the fact that feminist and ecofeminist theorists concerned for the whole structure of oppression need to remain in dialogue with and responsive to activists and theorists concerned more directly with individuals and marginalized groups (the specific forms and objects of oppression). Neither feminists nor ecofeminists can assume that any marginalized or oppressed group is included in their analyses of oppression unless the concerns of those groups are specifically named and addressed.

35. Warren, "Feminism and Ecology," 3.

36. Warren, "Feminism and Ecology," 4–5.

37. Warren, "Feminism and Ecology," 6 (italics in original), 7, 17, 18; and Karen Warren, "The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism," *Environmental Ethics* 12, no. 2 (1990): 125–46.

38. Barbara Noske, *Beyond Boundaries: Humans and Other Animals* (Buffalo NY: Black Rose Books, 1997), 114.

39. Lynda Birke, "Science, Feminism and Animal Natures: I. Extending the Boundaries," *Women's Studies International Forum* 14, no. 5 (1991): 445, 446, and "Exploring the Boundaries," 50.

40. Greta Gaard and Lori Gruen, "Ecofeminism: Toward Global Justice and Planetary Health," *Society and Nature* 2, no. 1 (1993): 1–35, 29.

41. Carol Adams, "'Mad Cow' Disease and the Animal Industrial Complex," *Organization and Environment* 10, no. 1 (1997): 26–51, 43.

42. Noske, *Beyond Boundaries*, 18–21.

43. Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

44. Lori Gruen, "On the Oppression of Women and Animals," *Environmental Ethics* 18, no. 4 (1996): 441–44; and Ronnie Zoe Hawkins, "Ecofeminism and Nonhumans: Continuity, Difference, Dualism, and Domination," *Hypatia* 13, no. 1 (1998): 158–197.

45. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 53.

46. Gruen, "On the Oppression of Women and Animals," 443.

47. Hawkins, "Ecofeminism and Nonhumans," 186.

48. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 58–59.

49. Gruen, "On the Oppression of Women and Animals," 443.

50. Spiegel, *The Dreaded Comparison*; Adams, *Neither Man nor Beast*; Jim Mason, *An Unnatural Order: Uncovering the Roots of Our Domination of Nature and Each Other* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993); and Gaard, "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism."

51. Marti Kheel, "From Heroic to Holistic Ethics: The Ecofeminist Challenge," in *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, ed. Gaard, 255–59, 259; and Kheel, "Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology: Reflections on Identity and Difference," in *Reweaving the World*, ed. Diamond and Orenstein, 136–37.

52. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 40, and "The Feminist Traffic in Animals," in Gaard, *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, 201, 202.

53. Deane Curtin, "Toward an Ecological Ethic of Care," *Hypatia* 6, no. 1 (1991): 69, 70, and "Recipes for Values," in *Cooking, Eating, Thinking: Transformative Philosophies of Food*, ed. Deane Curtin and Lisa Heldke (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 131, 132.

54. Jane Meyerding, "Feminist Criticism and Cultural Imperialism (Where does one end and the other begin)," *Agenda*, November/December 1982, 15, 22.

55. Adams, "The Feminist Traffic in Animals," 208–9, and *Neither Man nor Beast*, 123.

56. Kheel, "Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology," "License to Kill: An Ecofeminist Critique of Hunters' Discourse," in *Animals and Women*, ed. Adams and Donovan, 85–125, and "The Killing Game: An Ecofeminist Critique of Hunting," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 23 (1996): 30–44.

57. Kheel, "License to Kill," 101. Andrea Smith, a member of Women of All Red Nations, makes a similar comment, arguing that "interest in Native American hunting to the exclusion of all other aspects of Native culture is another way of holding to images of Native Americans as savages." Smith maintains that "what is true for Native cultures is not transferable to mainstream American culture. Such people [Euramerican defenders of hunting] would better spend their time preserving Native rights than appropriating their culture" (as quoted by Adams in *Neither Man nor Beast*, 105).

58. Kheel, "License to Kill," 88. This stance has been significantly altered with the Makah nation's introduction of the concept of "cultural whaling."

59. Brian Luke, "A Critical Analysis of Hunters' Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 19, no. 2 (1997): 41. Kheel's "From Heroic to Holistic Ethics" makes a similar point, citing Stephen Lackner, who reports that "only 5 percent of all animals are killed by other animals [omitting the animals slaughtered by humans]. Ninety-five percent of all animal lives are terminated without bloodshed: by old age, sickness and exhaustion, hunger and thirst, changing climates, and the like" (Kheel citing Lackner in *Peaceable Nature: An Optimistic View of Life on Earth* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984], 12).

60. Luke, "A Critical Analysis of Hunters' Ethics," 41, and "Violent Love: Hunting, Heterosexuality, and the Erotics of Men's Predation," *Feminist Studies* 24, no. 3 (1998): 628, 632, 649–50, 652–53.

61. Adams, *Neither Man nor Beast*, 147, 146, 152, and "Woman-Battering and Harm to Animals," 74. With Adams, I use the pronoun "he" to refer to batterers, based on U.S. statistical data that "women are six times more likely than men" to be abused by

an intimate companion ("Woman-Battering and Harm to Animals," 57). However, Adams also qualifies her text by noting that women may abuse women intimates; though no national statistics of lesbian battering are presently available, in at least one study, 38 percent of abused lesbians who had pets reported their partners also abused the animals ("Woman-Battering and Harm to Animals," 82 n.16).

62. Christine J. Cuomo, "Ecofeminism, Deep Ecology, and Human Population," in *Ecological Feminism*, ed. Karen J. Warren (New York: Routledge, 1994), 88–105; and Gaard and Gruen, "Ecofeminism." Neither I nor the sources cited equate the terms "United States" and "First World," but we do acknowledge that many communities (particularly communities of color) within the United States live in conditions of poverty and powerlessness that are comparable to those in Third World countries.

63. See Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*; Lori Gruen, "Dismantling Oppression: An Analysis of the Connection Between Women and Animals," in Gaard, *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, 60–90; Karen Davis, "Thinking Like a Chicken: Farm Animals and the Feminine Connection," in Adams and Donovan, *Animals and Women*, 192–212; Greta Gaard, "Milking Mother Nature: An Ecofeminist Critique of rBGH," *The Ecologist* 24, no. 6 (1994): 202–3, and "Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone Criticism Grows," *Alternatives* 21, no. 3 (1995): 6–9; and Adams, "'Mad Cow' Disease and the Animal Industrial Complex."

64. Arnold Arluke and Boria Sax, "The Nazi Treatment of Animals and People," in *Reinventing Biology: Respect for Life and the Creation of Knowledge*, ed. Lynda Birke and Ruth Hubbard (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 228–60.

65. Janet Biehl, "'Ecology' and the Modernization of Fascism in the German Ultra-right," *Society and Nature* 5, no. 2 (1994): 130–70; Arluke and Sax, "The Nazi Treatment of Animals and People"; Susanne Kappeler, "Speciesism, Racism, Nationalism . . . or the Power of Scientific Subjectivity," in Adams and Donovan, *Animals and Women*, 320–52.

66. Arluke and Sax, "The Nazi Treatment of Animals and People," 248, 242.