

*Dismantling Oppression:  
An Analysis of the Connection  
Between Women and Animals*

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Despite a growing awareness of the destructiveness of the human species and the precarious position in which such destruction puts all inhabitants of the earth, there has been shockingly little discussion of the fundamental forces that have led us to the brink. While multinational corporations and grassroots activists alike have stressed the urgency of a change in behavior, few have stressed the need for a serious change in attitudes and values. Those who do critically examine the underlying motivation for and psychology of destructive action tend to focus their attention on single issues, mimicking, in some ways, the very system at which their critique is aimed. Until recently this has been the trend among those engaged in the struggle for both women's and animal liberation.<sup>1</sup> Feminist theory, in all of its variety, focuses on the primacy of women's oppression, often to the exclusion of parallel concerns. Similarly, animal liberationists, by focusing on the pain and suffering of one group while often ignoring the pain and suffering of others,<sup>2</sup> have situated themselves firmly in the tradition of single-mindedness so common in Western institutions. Such exclusivity not only clouds the expansive nature of oppression, but also hinders the process of undermining such oppression and ultimately liberating all those oppressed.

The emerging discourse of ecofeminism attempts to take up the slack left by those who focus on various symptoms rather than the causes of oppression. In doing this, an often heterogeneous group of theorists have begun analyzing the connections between woman and nature and offering alternative conceptions of how we should live in the world. Whether theo-

retical, practical, or spiritual, ecofeminists call for a major shift in values. Ecofeminists of whatever variety (and there are many) are united in believing that it is immediately important that we each change our own perspectives and those of society from death-oriented to life-oriented—from a linear, fragmented, and detached mindset to a more direct, holistic appreciation of subjective knowing. How this shift is interpreted, however, varies tremendously within the ecofeminist literature.<sup>3</sup> For present purposes I want to suggest that any interpretation of an ecofeminist vision must include a reexamination of our relationship to nonhuman animals. In fact, I will suggest that an adequate ecofeminist theory must not only analyze the joint oppression of women and nature, but must specifically address the oppression of the nonhuman animals with whom we share the planet. In failing to do so, ecofeminism would run the risk of engaging in the sort of exclusionary theorizing that it ostensibly rejects.

The categories “woman” and “animal”<sup>4</sup> serve the same symbolic function in patriarchal society. Their construction as dominated, submissive “other” in theoretical discourse (whether explicitly so stated or implied) has sustained human male dominance. The role of women and animals in postindustrial society is to serve/be served up; women and animals are the used. Whether created as ideological icons to justify and preserve the superiority of men or captured as servants to provide for and comfort, the connection women and animals share is present in both theory and practice. By examining this connection and the way it sustains the constructed reality of patriarchal society, those struggling for the liberation of women and animals may be better able to reconstruct thought and action in a more balanced, less destructive way.

In this chapter I examine the connection between women and animals by discussing some of the various ways in which it is manifest in contemporary theory and in everyday life. This connection is not to be understood as a “natural” connection—one that suggests that women and animals are essentially similar—but rather a constructed connection that has been created by the patriarchy as a means of oppression. I then analyze the philosophies that serve as foundations for animal liberationist and feminist thought and attempt to show how these theories are inherently exclusionist. I then suggest that ecofeminism can and must remedy the problems with these theories. Finally, I discuss how an appreciation of the connection between women and animals and a renewed understanding of theories that advocate their liberation can enhance strategies of action for change.

## *The Connection*

The connection between woman and animal can be located in various strands of an elaborately constructed narrative.<sup>5</sup> In the process of creating what Donna Haraway has referred to as “origin stories,”<sup>6</sup> anthropologists, in this case primarily white, middle-class men, have concocted theories of human cultural development and then attempted to convince themselves and others of the truth or essential nature of one or another of them. In this section, I briefly present four of these theoretical frameworks that serve to justify the oppression of women and animals. While these narratives appear to borrow from and reinforce one another, my presentation is not meant to be a reflection of some true, progressive history.

One of the more popular origin stories suggests that an evolutionary shift occurred as a result of the emergence of hunting behavior in male hominids.<sup>7</sup> According to this theory, the hunter’s destructive, competitive, and violent activity directed toward his prey is what originally distinguished man from animal and thus culture from nature. This Myth of Man the Hunter was created by mid-twentieth-century Western minds (influenced by post–World War II political hostilities; the creation, use, and continuing development of nuclear weapons; and increased consumption in “advanced” Western societies); it defined a biologically determined being whose “natural” behavior served as the foundation of culture. It is hardly a coincidence that the act of killing was what established the superiority of man over animal and that the value of such behavior was naturalized and exalted.<sup>8</sup> The myth thus serves not only to posit an essential difference between man and animal but also to elevate man because of his ability to systematically destroy animals.

Theoreticians, by creating a history in which man is separate from and superior to animals, establish a mechanism in which a separation from woman can be grounded. In this account of human social evolution, woman’s body (being smaller, weaker, and reproductive) prevents her from participating in the hunt, and thus relegates her to the arena of non-culture. Woman’s nonparticipation is conceived as naturally inferior. Her reproductive capacity and life-bearing activities stand in sharp contrast to the death-bringing activities that underlie culture.<sup>9</sup> Constructed in this way, human social evolution establishes the subservient status of woman and animals.

The second framework suggests that as the march of culture continued, nomadic hunting and gathering societies developed into stationary

agrarian communities. The advent of agriculture brought with it a decrease in leisure time, the emergence of the process of domestication, and what can be understood as a further distancing of man from woman, animals, and nature. While there is no consensus as to why agriculture replaced foraging, it has been argued that the shift required more, rather than less, labor. As a result of an increased demand for laborers, women came to be thought of as breeders of a workforce. The need for more children to tend the land occurred at roughly the same time as the recognition of the mechanics of reproduction—a recognition that presumably was made possible by the domestication of animals. Once previously nomadic people settled down and began to cultivate the land, the domestication of animals, primarily sheep and goats, soon followed.<sup>10</sup> Before animals were domesticated, it would have been difficult to understand what role the male played in reproduction; observing animal mating may have clarified it. Thus, the domestication of animals, combined with the need for more laborers and the knowledge of how to create them, allowed for the further alienation and oppression of women. As Elizabeth Fisher suggests:

Now humans violated animals by making them their slaves. In taking them in and feeding them, humans first made friends with animals and then killed them. When they began manipulating the reproduction of animals, they were even more personally involved in practices which led to cruelty, guilt, and subsequent numbness. The keeping of animals would seem to have set a model for the enslavement of humans, in particular the large-scale exploitation of women captives for breeding and labor, which is a salient feature of the developing civilizations.<sup>11</sup>

The shift from nomadic existence to agricultural practices—practices founded on a belief that the natural world could be controlled and manipulated—permitted the conceptualization of animals as sluggish meat-making machines and reluctant laborers, and women as breeders of children.

The third framework, grounded in religious beliefs that developed with the rise of agriculture, also served as a source for separating man from woman and animals. Droughts, storms, and other natural conditions led to the devastation of crops, which in turn caused much suffering. Thus, nature was simultaneously the source of great fear and that which provided the means of survival. Woman, likened to the earth for her ability to bring forth life, was also feared. With the increased risks and uncertainties of the farming life came an intensified desire to dominate. This domination of both

natural forces and women was often sought through “divine intervention.” In order to enlist the help of the “gods,” various rituals were devised. By removing themselves from the natural activities of daily life, men believed they would be in closer touch with the “supernatural” powers that would protect them from nature. In religious mythology, if not in actual practice, women often served as symbols for the uncontrollable and harmful and thus were sacrificed in order to purify the community and appease the gods.<sup>12</sup> Animals too were sacrificed, and it has been suggested that many animals were first domesticated not as food sources but as sacrificial creatures.<sup>13</sup> Religious belief can thus also be seen as a particularly pernicious construction of women and animals as “others” to be used.<sup>14</sup>

During the rise of industrialization, religion based on divine forces was complimented by a fourth framework structured on a belief system that centered on the empirical. The scientific revolution of the sixteenth century established what Carolyn Merchant describes as the “mechanistic world view,”<sup>15</sup> a view that, in combination with the development of the “experimental method,” laid yet another conceptual foundation for the manipulation of animals and nature. Domination and the imposition of order were formalized through the scientific objectification of reality. Objective scientists rely on an epistemology that requires detachment and distance. This detachment serves as justification for the division between active pursuer of knowledge and passive object of investigation, and establishes the power of the former over the latter. By devaluing subjective experience, reducing living, spontaneous beings to machines to be studied, and establishing an epistemic privilege based on detached reason, the mechanistic/scientific mindset firmly distinguished man from nature, woman, and animals.<sup>16</sup>

The above-mentioned theoretical frameworks may be seen behind contemporary practices that involve, to varying degrees, the oppression and exploitation of women and animals. While not often explicitly recognized, the theories that separate man from animal and man from woman inform virtually every aspect of daily life. Such ways of constructing reality ground patriarchal conceptions of the world and its inhabitants. Only by critically evaluating the cultural and historical forces that gave rise to current beliefs can we begin to understand the motivations that compel individuals to behave as they do. With this in mind, I will now look at some of the ways in which the oppressive constructions of women and animals affect living beings.

Exploitation in the Name of Scientific Progress

Between 17 and 70 million animals are killed in U.S. laboratories every year. Under the guise of scientific inquiry, dogs, cats, monkeys, mice, rats, pigs, and other animals are routinely suffocated, starved, shocked, blinded, burned, beaten, frozen, electrocuted, and eventually killed. A majority of the experiments are conducted to satisfy curiosity rather than to improve anyone's health. For example, in a series of experiments conducted at Columbia University's Medical School in New York, experimenters placed pregnant baboons in restraining devices after implanting ten monitoring devices into the bodies of their fetuses. The mothers often gave birth at night, when no one was present, and the infants strangled to death. According to the researchers, "The baboons like to give birth when no one is around. Because of the restraining chair, and the catheters and electrodes, they can't properly tend to the infants . . . and they die."<sup>17</sup> At the University of California at Berkeley, an experimenter genitally masculinized female dogs to test their ability to copulate. The tests were performed before and after the administration of testosterone. The experimenter noted that "animals are unsuccessful in their attempts to copulate with receptive females. They mount and thrust vigorously but do not achieve intromission and establish a copulatory 'lock.'" He "tentatively concluded that the failure . . . of genitally masculinized females to insert and lock when mounting receptive females is due to incomplete penile development."<sup>18</sup> In an experiment conducted at the University of Texas, Dallas, seventy-one kittens aged between 4 and 112 days were given five to eight injections of the hallucinogen LSD. While the experimenters noted that "the behavioral effects of LSD in animals have received monumental attention and literally thousands of studies have dealt with the issue," they decided to go ahead and subject the kittens to the experiments in order to compare the effects on young animals with those on adults. They concluded that the drug "produced a constellation of behaviors [including tremors, vomiting, headshakes, and lack of coordination] that has been previously described in detail for the adult cat."<sup>19</sup>

Literally billions of dollars and countless animal lives have been spent in duplicative, often painful, and generally insignificant animal experiments. While much of the rhetoric employed to justify such experiments is cast in terms of altruistic researchers devoted to the promotion of human health and longevity, the bottom line is often obscured. Animal research in the

United States is big business, and the currency is more than pain and suffering.

Large corporations make enormous profits selling specialized equipment (such as the Columbus Instruments Convulsion Meter), restraining devices, electrically wired cages, surgical implants, and decapitators. Animals themselves, mass produced by corporations such as Charles Rivers, are marketed as commodities that can be modified to consumer specifications. One advertisement likens animals to automobiles: “When it comes to guinea pigs, now you have a choice. You can opt for our standard model that comes complete with hair. Or try our new 1988 stripped down, hairless model for speed and efficiency.”<sup>20</sup>

Reducing animals to objects devoid of feelings, desires, and interests is a common consequence of the scientific mindset by which those engaged in experimentation distance themselves from their subjects. Ordered from companies that exist to provide “tools” for the research business, animals’ bodies are currently bought and sold in ways that are reminiscent of slave trading in the United States<sup>21</sup> or, more recently, Nazi experiments on women:

In contemplation of experiments with a new soporific drug, we would appreciate your procuring for us a number of women. . . . We received your answer but consider the price of 200 marks a woman excessive. We propose to pay not more than 170 marks a head. If agreeable, we will take possession of the women. We need approximately 150. . . . Received the order of 150 women. Despite their emaciated condition, they were found satisfactory. . . . The tests were made. All subjects died. We shall contact you shortly on the subject of a new load.<sup>22</sup>

Conceiving of an experimental subject as an inferior, “subhuman” other—as a “specimen” meant to serve—lightens the burden of justifying the infliction of pain and death. Thus, current scientific practices motivate the cultivation of continued detachment.

The detachment is particularly acute in the area of contraceptive research, most of which is done on the female reproductive system. While the risks of childbirth are specific to females, the risks associated with contraception can be borne by either men or women. Yet it is primarily females, both human and nonhuman, who are subjected to risks in contraceptive research, which is controlled by male-dominated pharmaceutical companies. “Third World” women undoubtedly suffer the worst, in terms of both actual experimentation and the subsequent manipulation of reproductive

choice.<sup>23</sup> Motivated by the desire for profit and the belief that women's bodies are legitimate sites of experimentation, U.S. contraceptive companies have a history of allowing dangerous drugs to be marketed even after animals have been harmed by them. G. D. Searle, for example, consistently released fraudulent data about the safety of oral contraceptives. In one instance, an FDA investigation revealed that the company secretly removed a tumor from a dog and falsified animal test results. In one of Searle's first human trials for its birth control pill, which took place in Puerto Rico, one woman died of heart failure and another developed tuberculosis, yet such "side-effects" were rarely brought to the users' attention.<sup>24</sup> Upjohn, which manufactures Depo-Provera, found that the drug killed animals in laboratory tests, yet the company continued to market it overseas:

Animal studies that [showed] Depo caused a significant incidence of breast tumors in beagle dogs and endometrial cancer in rhesus monkeys are downplayed as being irrelevant to humans since the test animals are inappropriate. . . . 'It's no use explaining about beagle dogs,' said one British doctor who had just injected a Bangladeshi immigrant, 'she's an illiterate peasant from the bush.'<sup>25</sup>

Because women and animals are judged unable to comprehend science and are thus relegated to the position of passive object, their suffering and deaths are tolerable in the name of profit and progress.

Often experimenters attempt to justify the use of the bodies of women and animals by touting the benefits that those experimented on receive as a result. This is particularly the case in the area of the new reproductive technologies. Although a few infertile middle-class women have benefited by newly developed procedures such as artificial insemination, embryo transfer, and in vitro fertilization, the overall costs have not been adequately assessed. As we have seen, the suffering of women and animals is devalued from the start. The risks of contraceptives such as DES, the pill, and IUDs, which in many instances have led to the very infertility that the new reproductive technologies are now meant to overcome, were not sufficiently addressed. Further, the success rate of such technologies is often misrepresented, particularly by the media. For every previously infertile woman who is able to reproduce after treatment, there are many others who suffer—both emotionally and physically—in vain. Gena Corea, in *The Mother Machine*, discusses just how women may suffer from reproductive experimentation: hormonal treatment to create superovulation can damage ovaries, with unknown long-term effects; surgical manipulation may



damage ovaries and the uterus; and the dangers of anesthetics and the risk of infection are downplayed: “Men are experimenting on women in ways more damaging to women than anyone has publicly acknowledged. It may sound simple to just take a few eggs from a woman’s ovary, fertilize them, and return them to her uterus, but in fact the manipulations of the woman’s body and spirit involved in this procedure are extreme.”<sup>26</sup>

While the risks to women are often overlooked, concern for the fetus is more likely to be the focus of debate. Some researchers suggest that risks to the fetus are minimal, given the results of animal experiments. However, many researchers have questioned the usefulness and applicability of animal studies.<sup>27</sup> As Ruth Hubbard writes, “The guinea pigs for the *in vitro* procedure are the women who provide the eggs, the women who lend their wombs, and the children who are born.”<sup>28</sup>

Often it is not literally women’s bodies that are manipulated in laboratories but rather the body of “knowledge” created by Western scientists about women. Many animal experiments are designed to establish essential differences between men and women. Research on intelligence, aggression, competition, dominance, and the effect of various hormones on behavior serves to scientifically establish the lesser status of women.<sup>29</sup> Female animals stand in for human females in a number of experiments that would be too difficult to do with women.<sup>30</sup> One particularly chilling example of such research occurred at the University of Wisconsin Primate Research Center under the direction of Harry Harlow. In over two decades of research ostensibly designed to study affection, Harlow conducted numerous maternal deprivation experiments in which he separated baby monkeys from their mothers and placed the infants with what he called “monster mothers”:

Four surrogate monster mothers were created. One was a shaking mother which rocked so violently that the teeth and bones of the infant chattered in unison. The second was an air-blast mother which blew compressed air against the infant’s face and body with such violence that the infant looked as if it would be denuded. The third had an embedded steel frame which, on schedule or demand, would fling forward and knock the infant monkey off the mother’s body. The fourth monster mother, on schedule or demand, ejected brass spikes from her ventral surface, an abominable form of maternal tenderness.<sup>31</sup>

Harlow is also known for creating such horrors as the “well of despair,” the “tunnel of terror,” and living monster mothers who had been brought

up in isolation and developed such anti-social behavior that they had to be forcibly tied down in “rape racks” in order to be mated. Harlow’s work is objectionable not only because of the extreme cruelty inflicted on animals but also because of its reduction of love, affection, and companionship to manipulatable, reproducible variables that can be tinkered with by scientists. Commenting on Harlow’s work, Donna Haraway suggests that “misogyny is deeply implicated in the dream structure of laboratory culture; misogyny is built into the objects of everyday life in laboratory practice, including the bodies of the animals, the jokes in the publications, and the shape of the equipment.”<sup>32</sup>

Science, developed and conducted by white, middle-class Western men, has systematically exploited the bodies and minds of women and animals in a variety of ways. These practices, supported in part by a fallacious belief that objective science is value-free, are based on a conception of women and animals as different and lesser beings, beings whose suffering and death are justifiable sacrifices in the name of “progress.”

### The Hygiene Fetish and the Great Cover-Up

Most research scientists plead that without animal experiments, human health and life expectancy would not be what they are today. Others argue that progress in these areas is largely the result of improvements in diet and sanitation. It is important to note, however, that advances in hygiene and the resulting decrease in disease have occurred primarily in the more affluent nations. In wealthy countries, billions of dollars are poured into research to find cures for the diseases of affluence, while diseases that we already know how to prevent and cure ravage poor communities, causing the suffering and death of millions. If researchers were really concerned about human health, alleviating the suffering of the poor would surely be one of the top priorities.

Hygiene has unarguably improved the health of those living in industrial societies, yet Western cultures have perverted the need for cleanliness in order to provide manufacturers with profits, subjugate women, and further distance man from nature. The proliferation of cleaning products and their subsequent marketing simultaneously perpetuate the notion that “dirt” and “natural odors” must be controlled and eliminated, and that it is women’s job to do this. Thus, women have been placed at the boundary between nature, with its “contaminants,” and civilized sterility. In addition to separating man from woman and nature, the production of cleaning

products destroys the environment through the creation of toxic chemicals and contributes to the death of millions of animals.

Products ranging from oven cleaner to feminine deodorant spray are placed in every conceivable orifice of animals in order to test their toxicity. Two of the most common toxicity tests are the Draize eye irritancy test and the Acute oral toxicity test. In the former, a rabbit is placed in a restraining device while a substance (bleach, toilet bowl cleaner, air freshener, etc.) is placed in one of her eyes. The animal is then observed for eye swelling, ulceration, infection, and bleeding. The studies can last for as long as three weeks, during which time the eye may lose all distinguishing characteristics. At the end of the study the animals are killed and discarded. In oral toxicity tests, dogs, rats, and monkeys are forced to ingest various products. Often animals will display classic symptoms of poisoning—vomiting, diarrhea, paralysis, convulsions, and internal bleeding—but will be left to die “naturally.” Cleaning products must also undergo tests in which the animals are forced to inhale lethal doses of chemicals; tests in which a particular substance is injected under the skin, into the muscle, or into various organs; and tests in which animals are forced to swim in a chemical bath, often drowning before the effect of the chemicals on the animal’s system is determined. Ostensibly, these studies are designed to protect the consumer. However, the unreliable nature of such experiments and the difficulties associated with extrapolating data from one species to another make consumer protection doubtful. In addition, as we have seen with contraceptives, companies may determine that a particular product is highly dangerous but nonetheless release it. Animal experiments, regardless of their validity, cannot prevent accidental ingestion or dangerous exposure in humans. No matter how many animals die in attempts to determine the toxicity of furniture polish, for example, the effects on the child who drinks it will be the same.

These methods are also employed to test cosmetics, products primarily designed to mask women’s natural appearance. Advertising for lipstick, eyeshadow, mascara, and the like suggests that women must be made up in order to conform to (male) standards of beauty. Contemporary culture constructs men as the lookers and women as the looked at. As John Berger suggests, “Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed is female. Thus she turns herself into an object—and most particularly an object of vision: a

sight.”<sup>33</sup> By purchasing and using cosmetics, women become complicitous not only in their own reduction to the object of a gaze, but also in the suffering and death of animals.<sup>34</sup>

The same media manipulation of women and physical mutilation of animals are used by the fur industry. This industry, in addition, can also be indicted for playing on class differences for profit. Wearing furs, the industry informs us, not only beautifies and glamorizes women, but also bestows upon them a “high-class status.” Wearing the skins of dead animals empowers women, we are told. But, again, all it does is reduce women to objects who inadvertently serve the profit and pleasure interests of men. One fur coat requires the death of 4 to 5 leopards, 3 to 5 tigers, 10 lynx, up to 40 raccoons, or 35 to 65 mink.<sup>35</sup> In order to obtain their skins, animals are either trapped in the wild or raised on “ranches.” Trapped animals suffer tremendously when a steel-jaw trap slams tight on one of their limbs. As the animal struggles to break free, she may tear her flesh, break her bones, and severely injure her mouth and teeth. Some may even chew off their limbs in order to escape. Those who do not escape must remain in pain for days—without food or water—until the trapper arrives to kill them. “Ranched” animals are generally confined in small wire cages for their entire lives. When they have grown to full size, they are killed in the least expensive way possible, most commonly by having their necks broken, being gassed or suffocated, or by electrocution.

While women are covering up dirt and odors, masking their natural looks with cosmetic products, and enhancing their status and elegance by draping themselves in furs, animals are living and dying in terrible pain. The real cover-up, however, is the one perpetrated by industries that see both women and animals as manipulatable objects. Women are conditioned to believe that they must alter or disguise what is undesirable—nature—at great physical, psychological, and economic expense to themselves<sup>36</sup> and at immeasurable cost to animals. The end result is an enormous profit by a few individuals and the perpetuation of the notion that the exploitation of women and animals is a legitimate means to such an end.

### Domination in the Kitchen

The traditionally constructed role of woman as cleaner and the sight/site of male pleasure allows for the diminishment of women and the pain of animals. At least since the rise of industrial culture, women have been confined to the domestic sphere, where one of their primary roles is to provide

food. Certain animals have been domesticated and forced to provide food in a different sense. Women prepare and cook; animals are prepared and cooked. Both play subservient roles in the male-dominated institution of meat eating.

The practice of meat eating not only relegates women to a particular physical space—the kitchen or its equivalent—but also, as Carol Adams has forcefully argued, places women in a specifically constructed social place:

People with power have always eaten meat. . . . Dietary habits proclaim class distinctions, but they proclaim patriarchal distinctions as well. Women, second-class citizens, are more likely to eat what are considered to be second-class foods in a patriarchal culture: vegetables and fruits and grains, rather than meat. The sexism in meat eating recapitulates the class distinctions with an added twist: a mythology that meat is a masculine food and meat eating, a male activity.<sup>37</sup>

Men, as those in power, eat meat, and their consumption of flesh in turn perpetuates this power. In the hierarchy of consumption, men are at the top, women are below, and the more than 5 billion animals in the United States that are intensively reared, slaughtered, dismembered, packaged, and sold are lower still.<sup>38</sup>

Of all of the animals that are killed in food production, female animals fare the worst. The egg industry is the most acute example of highly centralized, corporate exploitation of female animals. Over 95 percent of the eggs produced in the United States come from factories that hold captive anywhere from a quarter of a million to five million hens each. These hens live in wire cages, set in rows, stacked five cages or more high. One cage housing four or five hens typically measures 12 by 18 inches, with no room to stretch a wing. In order to produce over 4.2 billion dozen eggs each year, hens are imprisoned in these cages from the time they are ready to start laying until their production rate drops and the factory manager decides it is time to throw them out. This usually occurs after a year, although the confinement may last as long as eighteen months. Since the hens spend virtually all of their lives standing on wire mesh, they often develop painfully malformed feet. Since they are unable to scratch, their claws may grow so long as to curl around the wire, trapping the bird until she dies from starvation or dehydration.

Female pigs, who are considered “hog producing machines,” do not rank much higher on the scale of abuse. Any recognition of their high intelligence and intense social desires is absent on sow farms. Sows are kept

chained in “iron maidens,” 6 by 2 foot metal stalls that are just bigger than the pig herself. Often they are placed in stalls and tethered. One report of what happens when the sows are first placed in confinement suggests how they feel about it:

The sows threw themselves violently backwards, straining against the tether. Sows thrashed their heads about as they twisted and turned in their struggle to free themselves. Often loud screams were emitted and occasionally individuals crashed bodily against the side boards of the tether stalls. This sometimes resulted in sows collapsing to the floor.<sup>39</sup>

Consider the dairy cow. From conception, the lives of cows are manipulated and controlled. The bucolic picture of the dairy cow playing with her calf in the pasture may be seen only in fairy tales and history books. She is now a living pincushion whose life is painful and poisoned. The industrialization of agriculture has not overlooked the dairy cow. She is put under stresses as severe as any imposed on pigs and poultry in the agribusinessman’s quest for ever greater profits.

In order to keep dairy cows in a constant state of lactation, they must be impregnated annually. After her first infant is taken from her at birth, she is milked by machines twice, sometimes three times, a day for ten months. After the third month she will be impregnated again. She will give birth only six to eight weeks after drying out. This intense cycle of pregnancy and hyperlactation can last only about five years,<sup>40</sup> and then the “spent” cow is sent to slaughter. During that five-year period, the overworked cow is likely to be very sick. In order to obtain the highest output, cows are fed high-energy concentrates. But the cow’s peculiar digestive system cannot adequately absorb nutrients from such feed. As a result, during peak production the cow often expends more energy than she is able to take in. According to John Webster of the University of Bristol School of Veterinary Science: “To achieve a comparably high work rate, a human would have to jog for about six hours a day, every day.”<sup>41</sup> Because her capacity to produce surpasses her ability to metabolize her feed, the cow begins to break down and use her own body tissues; she literally “milks off her own back.”

One-third of all dairy cows suffer from mastitis, a disease that infects the udders. The most common mastitis is caused by environmental pathogens that result from squalid housing conditions, particularly from fecal contamination. Treatment includes spraying the teats with disinfectants and injecting antibiotics directly into them. Both treatments are becoming in-

creasingly ineffective as the disease becomes resistant. The result for the cow is bleeding and acute pain, particularly during milking (which is always done by machine). The result for the consumer is contaminated milk.

The assembly-line mentality, which has allowed for herds of more than three thousand animals to be “processed” with minimal human labor, has insinuated itself into the cow’s process of reproduction. Dairy cows are always artificially inseminated. According to farmers, this method is faster, more efficient, and cheaper than maintaining bulls. With the use of hormone injections, cows will produce dozens of eggs at one time. After artificial insemination, the embryos will be flushed out of the womb and transplanted into surrogate cows through incisions in their flanks. Since only the best producer’s eggs are used, cows can be genetically manipulated to produce more milk. Additional advances may soon force cows to produce even more. The Bovine Growth Hormone (BGH) is being touted as a revolutionary way to increase milk yields without raising feed costs. Cows are already producing more milk than their bodies should and more than the market demands.<sup>42</sup> With the advent of BGH, the already shortened and painful life of the dairy cow may become even shorter and more painful.<sup>43</sup>

Meat eating and the consumption of “feminized protein”<sup>44</sup>—dairy products and eggs—in industrialized countries is perhaps the most prominent manifestation of a belief system in which woman and animals are reduced to objects to be consumed. Animals clearly can be seen as pawns in a power dynamic by which man asserts his superiority. Women too are oppressed by this system, which locates power in the ability to master and consume the flesh of another. In times of shortage, it is men who eat flesh. Indeed, a disproportionate number of women starve or suffer from malnutrition in countries where food is difficult to come by. The number of taboos associated with the foods women are allowed to consume, spanning a variety of cultures, can be seen as yet another way in which consumption—who consumes what—dictates power relations. As we saw with the institutions of science, hygiene, and beauty, it is men who dominate how reality is constructed, and too often it is women and animals who suffer.<sup>45</sup>

### *The Philosophy*

In the preceding section, I discussed just a few of the countless ways in which women are exploited by men in contemporary Western culture. In response to such oppression, a varied discourse has emerged that at-

tempts to theorize a way of thinking and acting to end the tyranny of patriarchal thought. Similarly, a theory opposed to the vast destruction of animal life has been developed. Both feminist theory and animal liberation theory address ways in which the continuing oppression of women and animals, respectively, can be curtailed and eliminated, yet neither draws on the strengths and insights of the other. By examining the more prominent strains of each of these theories, I hope to establish how each fails to adequately address certain fundamental features of oppression and thereby minimizes the possibility of its successful elimination.<sup>46</sup>

In this section, I examine what I call “anthropocentric feminisms” (liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, and socialist feminism), showing how each elevates humans above animals. I also discuss some of the shortcomings of radical feminism.<sup>47</sup> I then examine two of the most prominent animal liberation theories and trace their failure to provide a sufficient analysis of oppression to the fact that both are firmly situated within what can be considered an oppressive theoretical framework. Finally, I suggest that the shortcomings of the preceding theories can be overcome in the emerging discourse of a truly inclusive ecofeminism.

### Feminist Theory

Liberal feminism locates its critique of patriarchal institutions in their failure to recognize the equal competence and status of women. Following in the tradition of liberal political theory, liberal feminists view the ability to be rational as the basis of moral decision making. Rationality, then, and a respect for autonomy and self-determination are the primary values for liberal feminists. The oppression of women, according to this view, results from depriving women of education and opportunities. Liberal feminists do not provide any deep criticism of particular social institutions, but rather suggest that the problem of women’s oppression is one of exclusion. Freedom for the liberals will occur when women are provided with equal access to jobs and positions of power and are protected equally under the law.

The liberal feminist critique is problematic in a number of ways,<sup>48</sup> although for present purposes I want to discuss only one. The liberal feminist vision of liberation does not challenge the underlying structure of patriarchy. Indeed, it operates on the very same Western, rationalist assumptions. This was particularly apparent at a 1991 conference where many African women who espoused a liberal perspective eloquently argued for



equal access to resources.<sup>49</sup> They expressed the desire to be able to consume just as much as their Western sisters. Feminists of this sort seek equality in the system as it now exists (or perhaps with minor modification) while failing to consider the way in which consumption patterns, for example, affect the environment. Their position necessarily excludes concern for animals and the planet on which we all live. Criticizing such a view, Dorothy Dinnerstein writes:

Without hope . . . we are already dead. And an equal-rights-for-women stance that remains oriented to an otherwise unchanged social reality is blind hope: hope resigned, on some silent level of feeling, to the truth of what it denies: the imminence of world-murder. It is a business-as-usual strategy; a self-deceptive device for whiling away time; a blind to-do; a solemn fuss about concerns that make no sense if we have no future.<sup>50</sup>

Regardless of the disagreements that might arise about the underlying principles or assumptions of patriarchy, its implications, at least as they affect animals and many women, are destructive. This system, loosely defined, kills the bodies and minds of millions and threatens to kill the planet as well. Surely an adequate theory of liberation must address this.

Marxist feminists do provide an analysis of the system and suggest that the path to liberation must be cleared of economic inequalities. Following Marx, these feminists maintain that the oppression of women is part of a larger problem—the oppression of the working class by the bourgeoisie. Once private property is abolished and thus the primary mechanism of alienated labor eliminated, once human beings have equal access to the means of production, they will be free. For Marxist feminists, the liberation of women is linked with the process of integrating women into production.<sup>51</sup>

While Marxist feminists begin to address the problem of hierarchies and appreciate the importance of understanding human beings in relation to their particular place in history, they nonetheless elevate human beings over animals and the natural world. In fact, Marx viewed animals and nature as fundamentally distinct from human beings and as “objects” to be used in the service of humanity. In the *Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx distinguishes humans from animals on the grounds that the former not only engage in the activities of life (as do animals) but also can freely and consciously choose that activity: “Conscious life activity distinguishes man from the life activity of animals.”<sup>52</sup> Humans are distinct from and superior to animals in that they can transform/exploit the natural world, whereas

animals can only fulfill their immediate needs.<sup>53</sup> While quite different in many ways from liberals, the feminists who follow in the Marxist tradition continue to maintain their hierarchical position with regard to animals and the natural world.

Socialist feminists have developed a much more comprehensive theory than the Marxist feminists. While maintaining a strong emphasis on material concerns and historicity, socialist feminists specifically incorporate a gender analysis with a class analysis. They call for a radical transformation of most existing institutions: the family, education, compulsory heterosexuality, government, and industry.<sup>54</sup> For the most part, however, socialist feminists have not yet addressed the institutionalized oppression of animals and its relation to oppression generally. While it need not be exclusionary in this regard, concern for animals and nature is noticeably absent from current socialist feminist discourse.

All of the above-mentioned anthropocentric feminist theories focus on the full integration of women into culture and production, however conceived. A fundamental assumption of each position is that there is a distinction between the cultural and the natural and that women's liberation must occur within the former. Indeed, anthropocentric feminists understand the connection between woman and nature as part of the oppressive system of beliefs that grounds the exploitation of women. Therefore, such a connection must be denied. This view, perhaps unwittingly, reproduces the conception that culture and nature are distinct, a view that grounds much of patriarchal thinking. Failing to challenge this distinction undermines a more complete understanding of the workings of oppression.

Radical feminism, on the other hand, specifically addresses the connection between woman and animals/nature.<sup>55</sup> These feminists embrace the connection and attempt to strengthen it by denying the value of its opposite. In other words, radical feminists see women as closer to nature and men as closer to culture and thereby reject the cultural in favor of the natural. They elevate what they consider to be women's virtues—caring, nurturing, interdependence—and reject the individualist, rationalist, and destructive values typically associated with men. On this view, the widespread slaughter of animals and the degradation of the environment are seen as the responsibility of the patriarchs. Presumably such atrocities would not be committed if women were in control.

The radical feminist position, though at the other extreme from liberal, Marxist, and socialist feminism, also reproduces a particular patriarchal notion: the belief that woman and nature are essentially connected. This

view accepts a type of determinism that forever separates woman and man. The difference is that this account turns the hierarchy and power relation on its head. Instead of devaluing women, animals, and nature, radical feminists devalue men. Radical feminism is therefore not a completely liberatory theory, because in its vision of a future the oppressor and the oppressed do not disappear; they simply change their masks.

### Animal Liberation Theory

Two of the most popular theories which call for animal liberation are the rights-based theory of Tom Regan and the utilitarian theory of Peter Singer.<sup>56</sup> Regan's argument, briefly stated, goes as follows. Only beings with inherent value have rights. Inherent value is the value that individuals possess independent of their goodness or usefulness to others, and rights are the things that protect this value. All subjects-of-a-life have such value. Only self-conscious beings, capable of having beliefs and desires, only deliberate actors who have a conception of the future, are subjects-of-a-life. In addition, all beings who have inherent value have it equally. Inherent value cannot be gained by acting virtuously or lost by acting evilly. Inherent value is not something that can grow or diminish according to fads or fashion, popularity or privilege. According to Regan, at the very least all mentally normal mammals of a year or more are subjects-of-a-life and thus have inherent value that grounds their rights.

Singer's view is based not on rights, but rather on the principle of equal consideration. According to Singer, all beings who are capable of feeling pain and pleasure are subjects of moral consideration. In order to determine how to treat others, Singer argues that we must take the like interests of all those affected by an action into account. All like interests are counted, regardless of the skin color, sex, or species of the interest holder. Singer's utilitarian theory maintains that right actions are actions that maximize pleasure and minimize pain. This principle does not apply solely to physical suffering, but also to psychological pain insofar as it can be determined. For Singer, to disregard the pain and suffering of animals when making a decision that will affect them is "speciesist." Speciesism is a bias in favor of one's own species and is considered morally on a par with sexism and racism.

While both of these theories argue for the inclusion of animals in the moral sphere, they rely on reason and abstraction in order to succeed. Regan writes:

We know that many—literally, billions and billions—of these animals are subjects-of-a-life in the sense explained and so have inherent value if we do. And since, in order to arrive at the best theory of our duties to one another, we must recognize our equal inherent value as individuals, reason—not sentiment, not emotion—reason compels us to recognize the equal inherent value of these animals and, with this, their equal right to be treated with respect.<sup>57</sup>

Singer suggests that “an appeal to basic moral principles which we all accept, and the application of these principles to the victims of [Nazi and animal] experiments, is demanded by reason, not emotion.”<sup>58</sup> By focusing exclusively on the role of reason in moral deliberations, these philosophers perpetuate an unnecessary dichotomy between reason and emotion. 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. Furthermore, the beings we are considering are not always just animals; they are Lassie the dog and the family’s companion cat, bald eagles and bunnies, snakes and skunks. Similarly, humans are not just humans; they are friends and lovers, family and foe. The emotional force of kinship or closeness to another is a crucial element in thinking about moral deliberations. To ignore the reality of this influence in favor of some abstraction such as absolute equality may be not only impossible, but undesirable.

One way to overcome the false dualism between reason and emotion is by moving out of the realm of abstraction and getting closer to the effects of our everyday actions.<sup>59</sup> Much of the problem with the attitudes many people have toward animals stems from our removal from the animals themselves. Our responsibility for our own actions has been mediated. Who are these animals who suffer and die so that I can eat pot roast? I do not deprive them of movement and comfort; I do not take their young from them; I do not have to look into their eyes as I cut their throats. Most people are shielded from the consequences of their actions. As long as the theories that advocate the liberation of animals rely on abstraction, the full force of these consequences will remain too far removed to motivate a change in attitude.

### Ecofeminist Theory

All of the theories just discussed, in one way or another, accept normative dualisms that give rise to a logic of domination.<sup>60</sup> By embracing such a way

of thinking, these theories are exclusionist in the sense that each creates or maintains a category of "otherness." In the case of the anthropocentric feminists, "other" is nonhuman animals and nature; for radical feminists, "other" is culture and man; for the animal liberationists, "other" is human emotion and collectivity. The maintenance of such dualisms allows for the continued conceptualization of hierarchies in which a theoretically privileged group or way of thinking is superior. By establishing superiority in theory, the groundwork is laid for oppression of the inferior in practice.

Unlike these theories, ecofeminist theory will recognize sympathy and compassion as a fundamental feature of any inclusive, liberatory theory. An inclusive ecofeminist theory suggests that compassion is crucial to undoing oppression in both theory and practice. "Others" are not only marginalized by contemporary cultural practices, but negated by the process of defining a powerful "self." As Donna Haraway has written, "The construction of the self from the raw materials of the other, the appropriation of nature in the production of culture, the ripening of the human from the soil of the animal, the clarity of the white from the obscurity of color, the issue of man from the body of woman . . . mutually construct each other, but not equally."<sup>61</sup> Ecofeminists must challenge such dualistic constructions and, in so doing, attempt to establish a different system of values in which the normative category of "other" (animals, people of color, "Third World" people, the lower classes, etc.) is reevaluated. By recognizing that the exploitation that occurs as a result of establishing power over one group is unlikely to be confined to that group only, ecofeminists are committed to a reexamination and rejection of all forms of domination.

Revealing and respecting the value of the hitherto inferior "other" is one of the ways in which ecofeminists have attempted to eliminate hierarchies and undo the logic of domination. Constructing, and then naturalizing, hierarchies has been one of the more insidious justifying mechanisms for the oppression of both women and animals. Ecofeminists will thus focus on the elimination of all institutionalized hierarchy as another principle force for ending oppression. As Ynestra King suggests:

Life on earth is an interconnected web, not a hierarchy. There is no natural hierarchy; human hierarchy is projected on to nature and then used to justify social domination. Therefore, ecofeminist theory seeks to show the connections between all forms of domination, including the domination of nonhuman nature, and ecofeminist practice is necessarily anti-hierarchical.<sup>62</sup>

Nonhierarchical analysis, coupled with an expanded conception of moral community, allows ecofeminist theory to overcome the exclusionary pitfalls of both feminist and animal liberation philosophies. By challenging the central assumptions of oppression, an inclusive ecofeminism posits the beginnings of a truly liberatory theory. At the heart of ecofeminist theory and practice lies a vision of a new way of conceptualizing reality, a vision that moves away from rugged individualism and an overemphasis on reason to a more inclusive focus and respectful appreciation of difference.

### *Politics and Possibilities*

The exclusionary nature of both animal liberation and feminist theory often manifests itself in practice. A number of years ago, I came across a booth of women in Grand Central Station in New York who were collecting signatures for a petition to ban pornographic material. Having just begun to think about the connection between the oppression of women and that of animals, I was quite interested in the cover of a *Hustler* magazine that these women were displaying. The particularly telling image was of a woman being put through a meat-grinder. I approached the women and explained my interest. I was immediately barraged with accusations challenging the sincerity of my feminist sensibilities and was dismissed. I continued to explain my belief that understanding the roots of oppression of all beings was an important way to undermine patriarchal exploitation, but my words fell on deaf ears. Marti Kheel conveyed to me a similarly structured experience, only this time the person who would not listen was an animal liberationist: "A man called me up from a noted animal rights organization requesting items for a garage sale. I was told that magazines such as *Playboy*, *Hustler*, etc. would be welcome. When I reproached him for promoting sexist literature, he accused me of not really caring about animals."<sup>63</sup> Although both of these incidents involved the sensitive topic of pornography, and thus emotions may have been high, feminists working to end the oppression of both women and animals encounter such experiences with remarkable regularity.

Exclusivity and inability to see beyond particular cases of oppression are not limited to personal encounters. Animal rights organizations are, for the most part, run by men, while the bulk of those working for them as employees and volunteers are women. Those organizations that are headed by women continue to adhere to the top-down authoritarianism so common to patriarchal institutions. Decisions are made by a select few, usually

without the input of those who will be directly involved in carrying out the decisions. At conferences, demonstrations, and other media events, men are most often represented as the spokespeople and leaders of the movement. At the largest gathering of animal protectionists to that date—the 1990 March for the Animals—the majority of participants were women, but women were vastly underrepresented on the platform of speakers. The *Washington Post* quotes Sukey Leeds, who attended the march, as criticizing march organizers for allowing only three women to speak: “Women have done all the work in the animal rights movement . . . but men really run it and they have for years.”<sup>64</sup> While men have made important contributions to exposing the plight of animals, the sentiment that Leeds expresses is common and accurate. Those engaged in work for animal liberation have failed to examine the fundamental roots of oppression and as a result have incorporated oppressive practices into their struggle.<sup>65</sup>

Feminists, too, seldom see the practical connection between the liberation of women and that of animals. Few feminist gatherings are vegetarian, let alone vegan.<sup>66</sup> Often the decision to serve meat and other animal products is based on a reluctance to infringe on women’s rights to choose or deference to the cultural traditions of women of color, for example. Such rationalizations ignore the infringement of an animal’s “right”<sup>67</sup> to live a pain-free life and fail to recognize that cultural traditions are exactly those institutions at which legitimate feminist critiques are aimed. In an article that grapples with the question of “cultural imperialism” and the accusation that serving vegetarian food at feminist functions is racist, undermining the traditions of women of color, Jane Meyerding writes, “It is a contradiction for feminists to eat animals with whom they have no physical or spiritual relationship except that of exploiter to exploited. . . . I think concern for the lives of all beings is a vital, empowering part of feminist analysis; I don’t think we can strengthen our feminist struggle against one aspect of patriarchy by ignoring or accepting other aspects.”<sup>68</sup> By failing to take into account the plight of animals, feminists are acting out one of the deepest patriarchal attitudes. Ecofeminists argue that we need not and must not isolate the subjugation of women at the expense of the exploitation of animals. Indeed, the struggle for women’s liberation is inextricably linked to abolition of all oppression.

Feminists can complement their work by adopting one of the most striking features of animal liberation practice—the immediate recognition of the consequences of individual action. Animal liberationists are deeply aware of how some of the most basic choices they make—what they eat,

what they wear, what they purchase—directly affect the lives of animals. In their everyday practice, vegetarians and vegans live resistance. They simply do not contribute to the suffering of animals and the perpetuation of a system of oppression in this way. This refusal, rather than being antithetical to feminist concerns, in fact promotes them. For some feminists, such as the women at the Bloodroot Collective, taking direct action on behalf of animals was an outgrowth of their feminism:

Our vegetarianism stems . . . from a foundation of thought based on feminist ethics: a consciousness of our connections with other species and with the survival of the earth. . . . Dependence on a meat and poultry diet is cruel and destructive to creatures more like ourselves than we are willing to admit—whether we mean turkeys and cows or the humans starved by land wasted for animal farming purposes to feed the privileged few.<sup>69</sup>

By refusing to consume the products of pain (not eating animals, not wearing leather, fur, and feathers, not using makeup and household products that have been tested on animals), feminists, like animal liberationists, can directly deny the legitimacy of a patriarchal system that treats sentient individuals as objects to use and profit from.

Similarly, animal liberationists can gain much, both personally and politically, by embracing feminist practices. Ironically, while animal liberation stresses individual responsibility for actions, most people interested in protecting animals abdicate a certain amount of responsibility by sending checks to large, wealthy organizations in the hope that these groups will act on their behalf. While particular issues often require the coordination of many different people and their respective talents (which certainly requires money), much animal abuse can be combatted in the home and local community. The hierarchical structure of animal protection organizations, coupled with often overstated claims of effectiveness, promotes a “follow-the-leader” mentality that devalues individual action. In contrast, feminist practice, which focuses on group decision making and consensus, strengthens the voice of every individual and allows for the often difficult development of cooperative action.

Both feminists and animal liberationists would do well to reflect upon how their inclusion of certain “others” is often accomplished at the expense of other “others.” Animal liberation activists strive to set themselves apart from the “lunatic fringe,” implicitly declaring that they are just as patriarchal as the next guy. Feminists all too often fail to consider the various



ways in which oppression operates, particularly as it affects nonhumans, because, they proclaim, “We are not animals!” While the work of both feminists and animal liberationists has raised awareness of the oppressive conditions under which most women and animals live, and has often led to important reforms to improve these lives, the roots of oppression remain intact.

Ecofeminist practice attempts to dig at these roots. Calling for a fundamental shift in values, ecofeminist practice is a revolt against control, power, production, and competition in all of their manifestations. Such practice embraces a “methodological humility,”<sup>70</sup> a method of deep respect for difference. In action, one must always operate under the assumption that there may be something happening that cannot be immediately understood. This is a particularly useful strategy for developing alliances between animal liberationists and feminists. Methodological humility suggests that there may not be one right answer to the problem of undoing patriarchal oppression. Making connections, between the various ways in which oppression operates and between those individuals who suffer such oppression, will allow all beings to live healthier, more fulfilling, and freer lives.

#### NOTES

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1. For the present purposes I will be focusing on the oppression of women and animals, but I believe that the type of analysis I am doing is not exclusive. A similar analysis could be done for oppression of all kinds, but it would be more appropriately accomplished by people of color, the infirm, the colonized, and so on, who are undoubtedly more able than I am to speak of their own oppression.

2. While many animal liberationists deny such a claim in theory, their practice is quite different, as we shall see below, under “Politics and Possibilities.”

3. Some of the more recent books on ecofeminism include, Andrée Collard with Joyce Contrucci, *Rape of the Wild: Man's Violence Against Animals and the Earth* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein, eds., *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990); Judith Plant, ed., *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism* (Philadelphia: New Society Books, 1989); Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development* (London: Zed Books, 1988).

4. I would like to differentiate between the constructed category “woman” and

individual “women,” who have very different lives and experiences. When I seem to be speaking in more general terms, I do not mean to be overlooking differences between women and thus assuming a universal perspective, but rather am addressing the category. I have not figured out the best way to make this distinction explicit, but will use the term “woman” to indicate the constructed concept, as the text allows.

5. This section is a brief glance at some of the more prevalent theories that have served to establish and/or justify the subjugation of women and animals. For more detailed accounts please see the references.

6. Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 5.

7. For one of the best discussions of the creation of the Myth of Man the Hunter, see Haraway, *Primate Visions*, chap. 6.

8. Marti Kheef’s “Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology: Reflections on Identity and Difference,” in Diamond and Orenstein, *Reweaving the World*, 128–38, discusses contemporary manifestations of such behavior.

9. Some female anthropologists and other writers have attempted to reconstruct the his-story of early humans by emphasizing the important role women played in the development of culture. See, for example, Adrienne Zihlman, “Women as Shapers of the Human Adaptation,” in *Woman the Gatherer*, ed. Frances Dahlberg (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). While this is an interesting approach, it ultimately legitimizes the enterprise of constructing essential and deterministic origins.

10. For an examination of some of the theories about how and why animals were domesticated, see Elizabeth Fisher, *Woman’s Creation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), part 4.

11. Fisher, *Woman’s Creation*, 197.

12. See, for example, Joan Banberger, “The Myth of Matriarchy: Why Men Rule in Primitive Society,” in *Woman, Culture, and Society*, ed. Michelle Z. Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 263–81.

13. As John Zerzan writes: “Sheep and goats, the first animals to be domesticated, are known to have been widely used in religious ceremonies, and to have been raised in enclosed meadows for sacrificial purposes. Before they were domesticated, moreover, sheep had no wool suitable for textile purposes. The main use of the hen in the earliest centers of civilization ‘seems to have been,’ according to Darby, ‘sacrificial and divinatory rather than alimentary.’ Sauer adds that the ‘egg laying and meat production qualities’ of tamed fowl ‘are relatively late consequences of their domestication.’” *Lomakatsi* no. 3, P.O. Box 1920, Boulder, CO 80306.

14. For more on the way in which religion has served as a theoretical framework for oppression, see Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), and *Gyn/Ecology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), and Marilyn French, *Beyond Power* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1985).

15. Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983).

16. For a more detailed critique of science from feminist perspectives, see my “Gendered Knowledge? Examining Influences on Scientific and Ethological Inquiries,” in *Interpretation and Explanation in the Study of Animal Behavior: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Dale Jamieson and Marc Bekoff (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1990), 56–73, and the references therein.

17. Quoted in Lori Gruen and Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A Graphic Guide* (London: Camden Press, 1987), 65.

18. F. A. Beach, “Hormonal Modulation of Genital Reflexes in Male and Masculinized Female Dogs,” *Behavioral Neuroscience* 98 (1984): 325–32.

19. M. E. Trulson and G. A. Howell, “Ontogeny of the Behavioral Effects of Lysergic Acid Diethylamide in Cats,” *Developmental Psychobiology* 17 (1984): 329–46.

20. Such advertising copy is the norm in magazines such as *Lab Animal* and others that cater to research laboratories. For a discussion of these sorts of ads, see Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: New York Review of Books, 1990), 37–39.

21. Marjorie Spiegel, *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery* (New York: Mirror Books, 1988).

22. Excerpted from letters from the I. G. Farben chemical trust to Auschwitz, as quoted in Bruno Bettelheim, *The Informed Heart* (New York: Avon, 1971), 243. This example was brought to my attention by Jonathan Glover.

23. Betsy Hartmann, in her carefully researched work *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population Control and Contraceptive Choice* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), writes that “in the contraceptive research business, the Third World has long been an important laboratory for human testing.” She documents the ways in which many women are exploited and harmed as a result of population control pressures.

24. *Ibid.*, 177.

25. *Ibid.*, 189–91.

26. Gena Corea, *The Mother Machine* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 166.

27. For example, Dr. Pierre Soupart has questioned whether the data obtained from lab animals could be extrapolated to human beings, “especially when the extrapolation concerns chromosomes, which are specific for every single mammalian species.” As cited in Corea, *Mother Machine*, 151.

28. Ruth Hubbard, *The Politics of Women’s Biology* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 202. Hubbard objects here to the use of women as if they were animals—namely, guinea pigs. This view is anthropocentric, a notion I will discuss below, under “The Philosophy.”

29. See for example Hubbard, *Politics of Women’s Biology*, and Ruth Bleier, ed., *Feminist Approaches to Science* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1986), chap. 7.

30. One would like to say “too morally objectionable,” but given the history of scientific use and abuse of “others,” the difficulty undoubtedly lies in negative public opinion and illegality, rather than the experimenter’s conscience.

31. Harry Harlow, *Learning to Love* (New York: Aronson, 1974), 38.

32. Haraway, *Primate Visions*, 238. Indeed, the *Laboratory Primate Newsletter* 29, no. 3 (July 1990), ran the following “Research Report”:

“Two scientists at the University of Erewhon recently did an interesting study with chimpanzees. The results, published in a report in Reader’s Digest point to genetic origins for differences between the sexes.

“Two groups of chimps, one only males, the other only females, were taught to wash dishes after meals. 99% of the females, but only 2% of the males, also washed the stove without being specifically told. In addition, all of the females swept the kitchen floor daily, while none of the males displayed any sweeping behavior at all.

“The experiment might have been more valid if the groups could have been combined. In that way we would have been assured that the males and females were not treated differently by the investigators. Unfortunately, when this was attempted, uncontrollable fighting ensued. The basis for the conflict was never fully determined, but the experimenters noted that it invariably took place near a full bag of garbage.

“Other scientists all over the country are racing to duplicate these results.”

33. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), 47. Many have rightly challenged this way of understanding as overly deterministic. See, for example, the essays in Lorraine Gamman and Margaret Marshment, eds., *The Female Gaze* (Seattle: Real Comet Press, 1989). Nonetheless, it is certainly true that at least some women in the United States and Europe are complicitous in their construction as objects.

34. Many women have suggested that there is an element of self-pleasure in the use of makeup. To examine this perspective here would take us too far afield. However, I would like to suggest that these women consider using cruelty-free cosmetics when they choose to make themselves up. Cruelty-free cosmetics can be purchased from the following distributors, who offer mail order catalogues: Vegan Street, P.O. Box 5525, Rockville, MD, 20855; Earthsafe Products, P.O. Box 81061, Cleveland, Ohio, 44181; A Clear Alternative, 8707 West Lane, Magnolia, TX, 77355; Pamela Marsen, Inc., P.O. Box 119, Teaneck, NJ, 07666; or ask your local grocer to start carrying cruelty-free products.

35. These numbers do not include the “trash” animals that are “accidentally” caught in traps and discarded. For further information about the fur industry, see Greta Nilsson, *Facts About Fur* (Washington, D.C.: Animal Welfare Institute, 1980).

36. Consider the psychological and physical price that is exacted from women who feel compelled to live up to contemporary standards of what is beautiful and in the process starve themselves, subject themselves to such dangerous procedures

as breast augmentation, face lifts, and liposuction. In addition there is the cost of working both inside and outside the home in order to be a “good” woman and afford the products that such a constructed goal requires.

37. Carol Adams, “The Sexual Politics of Meat,” *Heresies* 6 (1987): 51–55. See also her book: *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum, 1990).

38. For an in-depth look at modern factory farming practices, see Jim Mason and Peter Singer, *Animal Factories* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1990).

39. G. Cronin, “The Development and Significance of Abnormal Stereotyped Behavior in Tethered Sows,” Ph.D. thesis, University of Wageningen, Netherlands, p. 25.

40. A cow can, under healthy conditions, live between twenty and twenty-five years.

41. John Webster, “Large Animal Practice: Health and Welfare of Animals in Modern Husbandry Systems—Dairy Cattle,” *In Practice*, May 1986, 87.

42. Overproduction in the dairy industry is chronic because of generous federal subsidies. In 1985, approximately 3 billion tax dollars were spent to buy 13 billion pounds of surplus dairy products in the United States.

43. Information reported in this section was discovered while I was doing research for the second edition of Peter Singer’s *Animal Liberation*. Much of this and more can be found therein.

44. I first came across this term in Carol Adams’ work.

45. Clearly, women too are responsible for the oppression of animals and often are complicitous in their own oppression. My point here, however, is to establish the connection between generic women and animals. In doing this, I do not mean to suggest that women need not think of their responsibilities as consumers, and I address these issues below, under “Politics and Possibilities.”

46. My analysis of these feminisms roughly follows Alison Jaggar’s characterization of them in *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983).

47. Karen J. Warren, “Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections,” *Environmental Ethics* 9 (1987): 3–21, and Ynestra King, “Feminism and the Revolt of Nature,” *Heresies* 13 (1981): 12–16, have both analyzed various feminist frameworks in order to determine how adequately they can accommodate ecological concerns. Building on their discussions I am interested in showing how each feminist framework is inadequate or incomplete not only in addressing the oppression of nature, but specifically in addressing the oppression of nonhuman animals.

48. See Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, for a discussion of some of them.

49. The World Women’s Conference for a Healthy Planet held on November 8–12, 1991, in Miami, Florida.

## *Dismantling Oppression*

50. Dorothy Dinnerstein, "Survival on Earth: The Meaning of Feminism," in Plant, *Healing the Wounds*, 193.

51. For a detailed discussion of Marxist feminism and some of the problems associated with it, see Lydia Sargent, *Women and Revolution* (Boston: South End Press, 1981).

52. Karl Marx, First Manuscript, "Alienated Labor," 127.

53. For an interesting critique of Marx's views on nature, see Ward Churchill, *Marxism and Native Americans* (Boston: South End Press, 1982).

54. See, for example, Jaggard, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, chaps. 6 and 10.

55. Here I have in mind those feminists whom Ynestra King calls "radical cultural feminists" ("Healing the Wounds: Feminism, Ecology, and the Nature/Culture Dualism," in Diamond and Orenstein, *Reweaving the World*) and Karen Warren calls "nature feminists" ("Feminism and Ecology"). Mary Daly is a leading example of such thinking.

56. See Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), and Singer, *Animal Liberation*.

57. Tom Regan, "The Case for Animal Rights," in *In Defense of Animals*, ed. Peter Singer (New York: Blackwell, 1985), 23–24.

58. Singer, *Animal Liberation*, iii.

59. Marti Kheel has suggested that even though "in our complex, modern society we may never be able to fully experience the impact of our moral decisions, we can, nonetheless, attempt as far as possible to experience emotionally the knowledge of this fact" ("The Liberation of Nature: A Circular Affair," *Environmental Ethics* 7 [1985]: 148).

60. For a sophisticated discussion of how normative dualisms are related to the logic of domination, see Karen J. Warren, "The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism," *Environmental Ethics* 12 (1990): 125–46.

61. Haraway, *Primate Visions*, 11.

62. Ynestra King, "The Ecology of Feminism and the Feminism of Ecology," in Plant, *Healing the Wounds*, 19.

63. Personal correspondence, September 1990. See also Kheel, "Speaking the Unspeakable: Sexism in the Animal Rights Movement," *Feminists for Animal Rights Newsletter*, Summer/Fall 1985.

64. *Washington Post*, June 11, 1990.

65. There are a few exceptions. A number of student organizations and Feminists for Animal Rights have recognized how oppressive theory often translates into oppressive practice and have conscientiously worked to combat both.

66. A "vegan" gathering is one in which no animal products are served. The fact that very few gatherings are vegan may be attributed to oversight or lack of awareness; in some cases, however, proposals to make feminist events cruelty-free have been rejected. For example, at the June 1990 convention of the National Women's

Studies Association, the Coordinating Council rejected the Ecofeminist Task Force recommendation that it “make a strong statement of feminist non-violence, and make NWSA a model of environmental and human behavior by adopting a policy that no animal products—including the flesh of cows, pigs, chickens, and fish, as well as all dairy and eggs—be served at the 1991 conference, or at any future conferences.”

67. Rights language is rooted in a predominantly masculinist tradition: see, for example, Josephine Donovan, “Animal Rights and Feminist Theory,” Chapter 7 in this volume. In addition, it is a particularly confusing rhetoric that can, in important instances, obfuscate questionable values.

68. Jane Meyerding, “Feminist Criticism and Cultural Imperialism (Where Does One End and the Other Begin),” *Animals’ Agenda* 2 (November–December 1982), 22–23.

69. Betsy Beavan, Noel Furie, and Selma Miriam, *The Second Seasonal Political Palate* (Bridgeport, Conn.: Sanguinaria Publishing, 1984), ix–x.

70. Uma Narayan develops this notion in a different context—namely, as a way in which white feminists and others can begin to bridge gaps that divide them from women of color. “Methodological humility,” however, seems an appropriate strategy for ecofeminism as well. See “Working Together Across Difference: Some Considerations on Emotions and Political Practice,” *Hypatia* 3 (Summer 1988): 31–47.