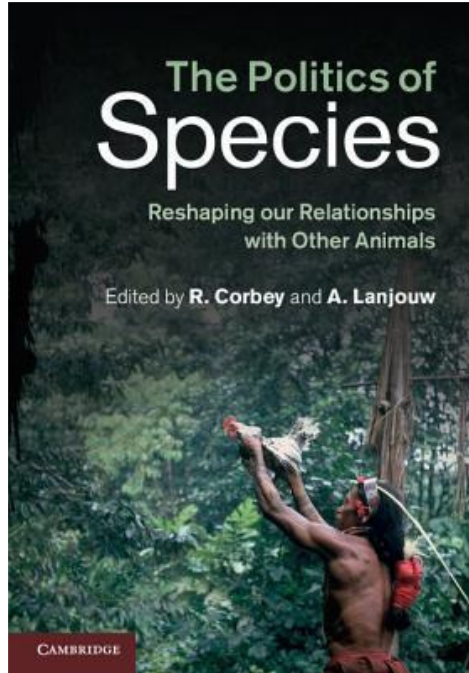


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**More Ethics Than Politics, More Animals Than Species**

Raymond Corbey and Annette Lanjouw, eds. *The Politics of Species: Reshaping our Relationships with Other Animals*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 310 pp. \$140 (hb).



*The Politics of Species: Reshaping our Relationships with Other Animals* (hereafter, *The Politics of Species*) is an interdisciplinary anthology that addresses the plight of nonhuman humans in a cultural landscape dominated by anthropocentric worldviews and institutional practices. Not a paralyzed lamentation on the past and current state of human-animal relations, the book tries to understand how these relations came to be in order to transform them into relationships that do fuller justice to animals' capacities and our human moral sensibilities. *The Politics of Species* is the material result of an interdisciplinary, closed roundtable of prominent scholars in Animal Studies, broadly construed, held in New York in August 2011. The Arcus Foundation — a private, global organization that promotes social justice, particularly LGBTQ equality, and biological conservation, which also has the distinction of being the world's largest private funder of great ape sanctuaries and conservation — organized the roundtable "to explore how humans define 'others' and position themselves in relation to those others.... [I]n the context of this debate, it is defined by species" (xiii). The anthology includes

contributions by the roundtable's diverse participants, and is edited by Raymond Corbey and Annette Lanjouw, who are also contributors. Corbey is a philosopher and anthropologist at Tilberg and Leiden universities, both in the Netherlands. Lanjouw is a vice-president of the Arcus Foundation and has academic training in biology and psychology and research experience in great ape ethology.

The volume consists of 23 contributors to 20 essays, and these contributors reflect the true interdisciplinary nature of Animal Studies, with expertise from anthropology to zoology, also including architecture, English, education, environmental studies, gender studies, law, medicine, neuroscience, and psychology. While the disciplines of anthropology, biology, and philosophy are most prominent, many contributors' backgrounds are multi- and trans-disciplinary and include related, more practical work outside academia, including animal advocacy and environmental conservation. That said, most of the contributions are by single authors rather than joint authorship, and largely follow their respective disciplines in method and substance. For example, renowned biologist Marc Bekoff muses on whether he ought to have advised villagers to "euthanize" tigers that enter their villages (21), but this is fundamentally an issue of morality, not a biological question, and Bekoff's expertise is biology, not moral philosophy. This is but one example where increased interdisciplinarity, such as more collaborative pieces involving multiple disciplines and methodologies, would have been an improvement, but this true of Animal Studies more broadly.

The audiences for which the *Politics of Species* is appropriate vary. Most obviously, it is suited for Animal Studies scholars and for those outside Animals Studies looking to gain a foothold on the recent literature. The overall tenor of the anthology is towards a better scientific understanding of animals as subjects and the implications of these findings for human-animal relationships. That said, the essays are predominantly from the social sciences and philosophy, so those interested in the more hermeneutical side of Animal Studies are advised to look elsewhere. It would also be an excellent text for an Animal Studies survey course, but would likely need to be complemented by a monograph such as Margo DeMello's *Animals and Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies* (2012) or Paul Waldau's *Animal Studies: An Introduction* (2013) in order to cover foundational issues in a more systematic way.

The anthology is divided into three parts: (I) Moving Beyond Speciesism, (II) Sentience and Agency, and (III) Toward Respectful Coexistence. Part I is largely diagnostic and analytic, in that it seeks to identify and critique the psychological, social, moral, economic, and political underpinnings that have allowed the current historically unprecedented levels of animal exploitation and domination in both scale and

systematicity as a part of global, industrialized capitalism. Part II concerns some recent paradigm-altering work on animal agency. For too long, from 17th century mechanism through a behaviorism that is present even today, animals have been treated as objects, not subjects. As psychology slowly awoke from its behaviorist slumber and philosophy cured its verificationist-emotivist hangover, animals began to be recognized as at least feeling subjects in academia in the latter half of the 20th century. While the very idea that animals can also be agents in their own right continues to be met with resistance, the essays in Part II develop cognitively, emotionally, and agentially richer accounts of animals' capacities. The essays in Part III are forward-looking and transformative pieces, seeking to reconceive, and more importantly, reimagine ways in which we can live in relations of respectful coexistence with animals in areas such as animal research, animal law, urban and suburban poultry husbandry, and human-primate shared communities.

It bears mentioning at once that the title, *The Politics of Species: Reshaping Our Relationships with Other Animals*, is somewhat misleading. At first glance, one might expect that the book is about environmental politics pertaining to, for example, the political dimensions of species conservation, but the book is not actually about biological species. Rather, it is about reconceiving relations between humans and sentient animals largely considered as individuals, not species. Secondly, one might also think that this is part of the political turn in Animal Studies, as seen, for example in so-called "Critical Animal Studies," and recent works in the philosophy of animal rights, such as Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka's *Zoopolis* (2011). To be sure, some contributions in *The Politics of Species* do concern politics. However, political analysis and discourse are relatively minor themes of the anthology. More prominent themes include critiques of speciesism, recent work on animal minds and agency, and new ideas as to how we should coexist with nonhuman animals, which is to say that most of entries are more moral, social, and legal in nature than political. So, what we really have here is a collection of new essays by prominent figures in Animal Studies, which is by no means a bad thing.

On, then, to the essays themselves, beginning with the biologist Marc Bekoff's "Who lives, who dies, and why? How speciesism undermines compassionate conservation and social justice," which leads off Part I: Moving Beyond Speciesism. In his piece, Bekoff continues his work at the intersection of biological conservation and animal protectionism. What makes it most worthwhile is its discussion of new developments in research on animal minds, particularly invertebrates, many of which are turning out to have far richer behavioral repertoires than had been previously imagined, and which

might occasion a reassessment of their moral standing. Bekoff addresses the moral significance of similarities and differences, the presences and absences of capacities in nonhuman animals.

Joan Dunayer also addresses speciesism in “The rights of sentient beings: moving beyond old and new speciesism.” She provides a much-needed critical discussion of “old speciesism,” the view that, while we should extend moral consideration beyond the human species, we should only do so to members of species that have what we deem to be morally significant features. In short, old speciesism still requires nonhuman animals to be human-like for moral consideration. Man is still the measure of all things, even if no longer the only valuable thing. She defends “new speciesism,” which does away with the anthropocentric bias of old speciesism, and claims that we should extend moral consideration and legal rights to all animals with nervous systems — even animals without a brain — invoking a principle of precaution. On her conception, all animals except sponges, which lack a nervous system, are morally considerable and possess rights. A worry with Dunayer’s position is that it is highly averse to moral risk. While it is *possible* that cnidarians, which have a simple neural net, brainless barnacles, which are sessile organisms, and *C. elegans*, a 1mm worm with exactly 302 neurons, are sentient, the weight of evidence suggests that they are not. Similarities are morally important, but differences can also make a moral difference.

The philosopher David Livingstone Smith has long argued that dehumanization, “the tendency to conceive of groups of people as creatures that are less than human” (40), is central to committing horrific acts such as genocide, because it removes them from the sphere of moral consideration. In “Indexically yours: why being human is more like being here than like being water,” he extends this notion to how we conceive of nonhuman animals in order to exploit them as we do. He argues that “human” does not designate a biological category, and as an indexical term “referring to someone as human is referring to them as a member of one’s own natural kind” (49). In short, being human means being “one of us.” He rightly notes that biological taxonomy should not be taken to have any moral implications. It is only when we impose the more value-laden folk taxonomies onto the biological world that such moral implications begin to develop. The core insight is that the otherization of groups of human beings is of a piece with the otherization of groups of nonhuman animals.

The philosopher Edouard Machery’s “Apeism and racism: reasons and remedies” examines what he calls “apeism” or “an indifference toward the welfare of apes” (54), particularly the inability to empathize with their suffering. He notes that one can be a speciesist without being an apeist, and that “the wrongness of apeism is easier to

defend than the wrongness of speciesism" (55). But here Machery may well be guilty of what Dunayer termed "old speciesism." Machery considers three pragmatic strategies to reduce apeism: contact, enlightenment, and individualization. Evidence from psychology suggests that contact with races other than one's own undermines racism, and so Machery argues that we should engage in contact with great apes through physical observation in zoos, research centers, sanctuaries, through ecotourism, and virtual observation via documentaries, in order to reduce apeism. Machery does not address the moral hazards that institutions such as zoos and practices such as ecotourism pose, but he does recognize that contact alone is likely insufficient to counter apeism. After all, racism and sexism persist despite constant contact between the races and sexes. He instead considers a strategy of enlightenment in terms of increased education about apes' cognitive capacities and increased emotional sensitivity to combat apeism, but ultimately rejects this in favor of what he calls "individualizing apes." The strategy is to move away from conceiving of apes as groups or species and instead to think of them as individuals, because it will make it easier for humans to reject apeism and to extend moral consideration to them.

In "Race' and species in the post-World War II United Nations discourse on human rights," Raymond Corbey argues that efforts to curb stereotypes often embody such stereotypes through analyses of international discourse on human rights after World War II and the Great Ape Project, which seeks to extend human rights to all other great apes. Corbey critiques the human exceptionalism present in United Nations's humanist discourse, linking this to the Judeo-Christian tradition of human exceptionalism. Most interestingly, he notes the strong anthropocentrism in contemporary contractualist moral philosophy in the works of Charles Taylor, Jürgen Habermas, and Axel Honneth, operating in the wakes of Kant and Rosseau, which, while now more multicultural, are still largely silent on the animals question. Corbey laments the absence of recognition perpetuated by this stereotypical thinking about expanding beyond stereotypes.

Wrapping up Part I, Richard Twine's "Addressing the animal-industrial complex" does just that. He is interested in furthering the "new" term "animal-industrial complex," which he claims has not been used in academic publications prior to Barbara Noske's work (1989). Twine draws parallels between the military-industrial complex, prison-industrial complex, the entertainment-industrial complex, and the pharmaceutical-industrial complex, noting how these have incorporated animal exploitation. However, the concept of the animal-industrial complex is not new even if the terms are, and surely concepts and terms are not the same. For example, Ruth Harrison's *Animal Machines: The New Factory Farming Industry* (1964) was widely read and highly

influential — providing the empirical backdrop that made Peter Singer’s seminal *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for our Treatment of Animals* (1975) possible —, for exposing the largest aspect of the animal-industrial complex to the public. So, while not new, the concept of the animal-industrial complex is a profound one, and Twine nicely describes how the various complexes reinforce each other in capitalist economies.

Leading off Part II: Sentience and Agency is Lori Marino’s “Humans, dolphins, and moral inclusivity.” Marino, a behavioral neuroscientist, argues that the evidence of dolphins’ and other cetaceans’ cognitive capacities provides “strong support for recognizing their status as individuals with basic rights comparable to those of humans” (95). She first discusses recent empirical research on the cetaceans’ brains, the ways they differs from primates’ brains, dolphin intelligence, and their complex social behavior and culture. She then provides harrowing accounts of the many ways in which humans use and abuse cetaceans, and the harmful effects this has on them. The most interesting part of the piece is Marino’s conjecture that we would not allow such visible and wholesale slaughter of great apes or elephants (105), because marine mammals are more difficult for humans to identify with, since they look, move, live, and communicate so differently from us: “cetaceans ... represent extremes of similarities and differences that challenge our ability to recognize them as moral equals” (104). One worry is that Marino bases cetaceans’ moral equality to humans on the basis of their cognitive similarity to us, yet her evidence is almost exclusively about dolphins, which are known to be the most intelligent cetaceans. Whether whales and porpoises also merit moral equality will require further argumentation.

In “The expression of grief in moneys, apes, and other animals,” anthropologist Barbara J. King provides a nuanced analysis of grief in nonhuman animals, sensitive to the epistemological challenge of attributing emotions and other mental states to animals on the basis of their behavior. She begins by giving a range of conservative to liberal definitions of grief and love, including a discussion of when behavior does not meet the definitional criteria of grief. She then gives evidence of grief in chimpanzees, gorillas, and dolphins. She mentions her new book *Animals Grieve* (2013), which includes stories of mourning among domestic cats, dogs, rabbits, ducks, geese, and members of other species, which are surely more controversial, but does not discuss these cases further here.

As the title suggests, in “Great ape mindreading: what’s at stake?” philosopher Kristin Andrews addresses the question: what stands or falls with the claim that great apes cannot mindread? Mindreading is “the ability to see that others have beliefs that could be true or false, which permits joint attention and shared intentions” (115). The

dominant account is that humans differ from other apes because humans can mindread. Andrews's philosophical foil is Christine Korsgaard, a Kantian ethicist who defends an interpretation of Kantian agency. It nearly goes without saying that Kant's account of agency is (overly) intellectualist, and has generally negative implications for animal minds and moral considerability. Andrews argues that, even if it turns out that great apes cannot mindread, they do nonetheless have the core elements necessary for agency, and so mindreading should not be a necessary condition for moral or legal standing. In short, Andrews seeks to de-escalate the stakes of great ape mindreading. To do so, she argues that it is a mistake to include mindreading in our accounts of autonomous agency, that great apes are capable of attributing intentionality to others, and through self-creation and improvement, including through changes of personality and through teaching.

Daniel Hutto, a philosophical psychologist, continues themes in Andrews's piece, defending a more robustly non-cognitivist approach to understanding how great apes and humans engage with others in "Intersubjective engagements without theory of mind: a cross species comparison." Hutto critiques cognitivist approaches exemplified by Peter Carruthers, who defends higher order thought theory of consciousness, and claims that having a theory of mind is necessary for phenomenal consciousness. For his part, Hutto argues that we engage with other minds in ways which are "emotionally charged, enactive, and nonrepresentational," rather than through the cognitive belief that they are conscious (127). He goes on to differentiate two levels of minding minds, one which is immediate and non-conceptual, and the other which is mediated and conceptual (129), which opens up the possibility that animals mind minds even if they are incapable of forming beliefs (135). He concludes that, while sentient nonhuman animals, particularly apes, may lack full-blown moral agency, their interpersonal actions may nonetheless be morally significant and that such apes are clearly morally considerable.

Transitioning from philosophy of animal minds to a much more practical inquiry, physical anthropologist Lucy Birkett and evolutionary primatologist William McGrew question the moral permissibility of keeping apes in captivity, with the sole exception of sanctuaries for those incapable of being returned to the wild, in "Unnatural behavior: obstacle or insight at the species interface". They argue that captivity, through its various restrictions on liberty, spawns unnatural and sufficiently harmful behavior that it constitutes suffering.

Jet Bakels's "Animals as persons in Sumatra" begins a portion of *The Politics of Species* dedicated to transspecies cultural anthropology, broadly construed. Bakels's piece catalogs human-animal relations in two traditional societies in Sumatra, Indonesia, the Metawai tribesmen and the Kerinci farmers. Bakels argues that these non-Western cultures have very different conceptions of the relationship between humans and animals, which can "inspire and inform the Western struggle with moral inconsistencies with respect to animals" (156). The Mentawaians attribute ensoulment and personhood much more broadly than in the West, even to the abiotic natural world and human artifacts, and their ethic emphasizes minimizing harm, which they regard as compatible with respectful killing and use of animals.

In "Interspecies love: Being and becoming with a common ant, *Ectatomma ruidum* (Roger)" cultural anthropologist Eben Kirskey regards these ants native to Central and South America as "agents of cosmopolitical assembly, conscious beings who become involved with other creatures through relations of reciprocity, kinship, and accountability (165). Assuming this is not hyperbole, it appears that Kirskey's account is guilty of what Gruen calls "over-empathizing" (discussed below) in his attribution of sophisticated mental attributes to ants.

Beginning Part III: Toward Respectful Coexistence, but continuing the cultural anthropological portion of the text, is anthropologist Agustín Fuentes' "Social minds and social selves: redefining the human-alloprimate interface." He argues that the moral similarity between humans and animals consists in our shared aspects of personhood. He argues for two claims: (1) evolutionary and ethnographic approaches to anthropology occasion a reappraisal of the human-primate relations, and (2) altruism and cooperation are keys to understanding these relationships (180).

In "The human-macaque interface in the Sulawesi Highlands" anthropologist Erin Riley seeks to further the subfield "ethnoprimatology," which seeks to bridge the divide between physical anthropology and cultural anthropology, which is a tall order considering their methodological and epistemological differences (189). She does so through a case study of macaques in Sulawesi, Indonesia. There, the Lindu people, like many non-Western cultures, have a conception of the human-animal relationship as more continuous and inclusive, which Riley holds as promising for natural conservation (194-196).

Annette Lanjou's "The fabric of life: Linking conservation and welfare" develops a view of biodiversity conservation that is also sympathetic to animal welfare. She recognizes that all species are important, yet acknowledges that so-called charismatic megafauna,



which most easily foster environmental protection in the public imagination, should be leveraged. Much like the World Wildlife Fund, she emphasizes flagship species in general and great apes in particular, which, if conserved, will indirectly protect many other species due to their large habitat requirements. While she acknowledges the tension between animal and environmental approaches, she does little to resolve this tension.

Molly Mullin, a cultural anthropologist, explores the recent phenomenon of urban, domestic chicken farming in “Home flocks: Deindustrial domestications on the coop tour.” With “fowl visions” Mullin endeavors to rear chickens of her own at her Michigan homestead (209). She draws on this experience to explore coop tours, which are informal tours of chicken coops for fellow enthusiasts and other interested citizens. This is an interesting piece which complicates urban-rural divides, and explores the moral tensions which arise when caring for chickens yet also keeping them captive and killing them. Yet these tensions are left largely unresolved; she considers various ways of procuring eggs, acknowledging that they could stop eating altogether, but defends her flock and her consumption of eggs on the grounds that she doesn’t “like to make such choices” (221), failing to acknowledge that this too is a choice.

In “Entangled empathy: An alternative approach to animal ethics,” philosopher Lori Gruen argues that the traditional model of extending moral concern from humans to other animals, as advanced by Peter Singer, Tom Regan, and others, often includes what has come to be known as the “marginal cases argument” for the moral considerability of nonhuman animals. While Gruen has deployed this strategy in the past, she believes that it has not led to a fundamental shift in our treatment of nonhuman animals (224). As evidence, she cites the facts that in the United States at this time, we still used chimpanzees for invasive medical research and that whales and elephants are kept captive.<sup>1</sup> Gruen seeks an alternative model, leveraging feminist critiques of the assumed oppositional character of equality and difference, and rather than argue how we should extend moral consideration to animals, we should start with the fact that we are already in relationships with animals. This view seems similar to Mary Midgley’s notion of a “mixed community” developed in *Animals And Why They Matter: A Journey Around the Species Barrier* (1983). This “entangled empathy” is where empathizing individuals “first respond with a precognitive, empathetic reaction to the interests of another” yet involves both affect and cognition (226). Gruen takes it that some things are “proper objects of empathetic attention” (229), and devotes the rest of the essay to empathetic failures. She is sensitive to the worry that we might be guilty of anthropomorphism in our empathizing, of incorrectly attributing which she calls “over-empathizing.”

Epistemic empathetic failure is addressable via increased understanding, but as Gruen rightly notes, ethical empathetic failures are more difficult to address. While admittedly an underdeveloped sketch, entangled empathy is a promising alternative or complement to extensionist moral philosophy about animals.

“Extending human research protections to non-human animals,” by physician Hope Ferdowsian and attorney Chong Choe, makes the argument that Principlism, an influential approach in medical ethics, especially the ethics of biomedical research, and which requires that our moral reasoning take into account and balance several irreducible moral principles, typically including autonomy, beneficence, and justice (Ferdowsian and Choe omit non-maleficence and add “vulnerability”), have more profound implications for research involving animal subjects than is typically realized. They apply these principles of medical ethics, concluding that animals need greater protections in research than they currently receive.

In the volume’s final piece, “The capacity of non-human animals for legal personhood and legal rights,” renowned lawyer and animal legal advocate Steven Wise argues that we need to move from a legal conception of animals as things to a legal conception of animals as persons. He considers Kant’s view of autonomy to be “full autonomy,” but recognizes lesser, “practical autonomies” as well, which in principle apply to at least some non-human animals. Wise argues that practical autonomy is sufficient for the ascription of basic liberty rights. He then makes the case that at least chimpanzees possess attributes sufficient for practical autonomy, and therefore basic liberty rights. For more information on this legal project, see the Nonhuman Rights Project.

All told, *The Politics of Species* is a very strong contribution to the growing Animal Studies literature. As shown in this review, it skillfully blends both depth and practical application, as well including a wide diversity of topics and methodologies. *The Politics of Species* is a recommended read.

## Note

1. Yet, since the time of publication, the National Institutes of Health called for the retirement of almost all chimpanzees used in federal research in 2013, and in 2015, US Fish and Wildlife Service listed all chimpanzees, including those in captivity as endangered. Marine mammals, including whales, receive special protection under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (1972), and due to the popularity of the documentary *Blackfish*, SeaWorld’s attendance and profit have declined considerably. In March of 2016, SeaWorld announced that they would discontinue captive Orca breeding,

effectively signaling that the present generation of captive Orcas is also the last generation of captive Orcas. Lastly, the Ringling Brothers Circus announced the retirement of elephants in 2015. While slower than one might like, fundamental change is certainly underway, at least with respect to the most sentient animals.