
Animal Advocacy, Feminism and Intersectionality

by

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Abstract: The gendered and intersectional dimensions of the animal advocacy movement provide an important reason for “the animal question” to be embraced as a feminist issue and, concomitantly, for feminists to consider animal identity and human privilege as acceptable elements of an intersectional analysis. I argue that the animal advocacy movement should be regarded as a women’s movement as it gives rise to gendered, class, and racialised practices that impact the lives and experiences of its disproportionately female membership. Accordingly, the animal advocacy movement, including its central attention to species difference, should be of feminist and intersectional concern. Thus, the goals that the movement aims to advance should be understood as feminist issues not just because of the links between the oppression of marginalized humans and animals that existing animal theory has already demonstrated, but also because the majority of animal advocates are women whose experiences with animal advocacy is adversely inflected by gendering and other differentiating dynamics and processes. After arguing for this association of the animal advocacy movement as a women’s movement, I revisit some of the current internal debates within intersectional theory about its proper parameters. I do so to explain why concerns advanced in these debates do not foreclose the consideration of species difference as one of the sites/axes/grounds of difference to which intersectionalists should attend.

Introduction

Intersectionality is a theory and methodology that instructs its adherents to examine the mutually generative and integrative nature of social identities as well as the power relations and the structures and hierarchies of difference to which they give rise. It signals a commitment to integrative analyses that assume that social forces that construct difference come into being through each other and it resists unidimensional analyses that study identities and difference-based oppressions in isolation or to the exclusion of each other (Hancock 2007). Sirma Bilge (2010) notes how intersectionality as academics have practised it thus far operates on two

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levels: the macrosociological level regarding multiple systems of power and oppression and the microsociological level regarding the effects on individual lives. Although some scholars have criticised intersectionality literature as too focused on one of the levels at the expense of the other, the theory in general has enjoyed widespread support. Most scholars working in the area of feminist studies embrace the notion of intersectionality in the area of feminist studies as important to understanding gendering processes and the lives of women (Yuval-Davis 2006, Bedolla 2007). As a concept, intersectionality currently enjoys a global and interdisciplinary academic reach (Nash 2011, Choo 2012). Indeed, some suggest that intersectionality has now attained the status of a “buzzword” for scholars to use to indicate a stance that involves recognizing multiple and intersecting markers of identity, as opposed to an additive approach, while leaving space for what this recognition entails (Davis 2008, p. 68, 75, 77-79).

Intersectionality’s open-endedness also generates breadth in the theory’s attention to differences. Some scholars suggest that intersectionality does not have to focus on particular modalities of difference, but rather can be broadly applied to understand society (Hancock 2007, Dhamoon 2010). Where the dynamics of specific differences are the focus, breadth is also apparent in the selection of differences that have been analyzed. Although the analytical focus tends to coalesce on the “race-class-gender trinity (Hancock 2004, p. 234)” studies have also included other categories such as sexual identity and nationality by focussing on transgendered identities and migrants (Hines 2010, Bürkner 2011). As Paul Scheibelhofer and Vince Marotta (2012, p.8) discuss, some scholars have defended this trinity as especially important while others argue that these three categories should operate as a baseline into which other markers of difference should be integrated given the particular project at issue.

This internal discussion on which differences should constitute the theory’s focus demonstrate its maturity as a theory. It is now sufficiently secure in its academic stature and expansive reach that theorists committed to it are comfortable identifying flaws and engaging in debates about its shortcomings. Other debates also circulate and concern further issues about how to conceptualize intersectionality and define its parameters; they address the scope of the theory and its methodology as well as the ways in which scholarship on intersectionality is or should be mobilized for political purposes (Bilge 2010; Dhamoon 2010; Walby, Armstrong and Strid 2012). These debates reflect a difference in comfort level with intersectionality’s conceptual open-endedness (Davis 2008). Some argue that it is this very ambiguity that has led intersectionality to be successful and embraced as a central component of feminist scholarship (Choo and Ferree 2010). While intersectionality’s unspecified boundaries may be one of its attractive qualities, it has also generated calls for further definition regarding what intersectionality is and how it should be conceptualized and applied to global contexts (Scheibelhofer and Marotta 2010). Within these interrogations, determining the role of categories and the end intersectionality should serve are all questions on which many scholars seek further certainty.

Yet, despite all of these internal debates about intersectionality’s purpose, one boundary has remained certain: the anthropocentric focus of even recent literature

in this area. Within the debate about proper parameters and conceptual scope, the focus on human lives is uncontested. While important self-reflection has occurred among intersectional theorists about the theory's limits, discussion has not yet encompassed considerations of human species privilege or the oppression of animals. This general failure to focus on nonhuman lives and integrate species as a site of difference, identity, privilege, and oppression into the intersectional mix is interesting given the rise of posthumanist studies in academia (Castricano 2008; Oliver 2009; Wolfe, 2010; Pedersen 2012). However, the non-interrogation of species difference is particularly interesting considering the theory's essential commitment to recognizing unexcavated, underappreciated, and marginalized differences and identities. It is striking that a theory whose signature trait is encouraging consciousness of how lives are mediated by multiple axes of difference and dominance, has not incorporated species difference into its fold or extended its horizon past human lives even though its open-endedness would facilitate that inclusion.

Elsewhere, I have addressed how the integration of species identity and animal issues into intersectionality is an extension that is acutely compatible with intersectionality's main tenets and underlying theoretical orientation (Deckha 2008). I have also explained how many issues identified as women's issues, and thus quickly accepted by feminists as normalized areas of feminist study, also involve animal/species dimensions and implicate posthumanist concerns about power and justice. Conversely, I have discussed how those issues seen as "animal rights" issues also intensely relate to issues of race, gender, ethnicity and class that normally capture feminist attention (Deckha 2006). These are three ways in which posthumanist analyses can properly reside within intersectionality and enrich its contributions to theorizing injustice.

Here, I want to develop a further reason for feminists to consider animals as "natural" objects of "feminist concerns" by focussing on the *social movement of animal advocacy*. The gendered and intersectional dimensions of the animal advocacy movement (broadly defined here to include welfarist and abolitionist activism)¹ in economically affluent geopolitical spaces establish yet another link for "the animal question" to be embraced as a feminist issue and, concomitantly, for feminists to consider animal identity and human privilege as acceptable elements of an intersectional analysis. Particularly, I argue that the animal advocacy movement should be regarded as a women's movement as it gives rise to gendered, class, and racialised practices that impact the lives and experiences of its primarily female membership. Accordingly, the animal advocacy movement, including its central attention to species difference, should be of feminist and intersectional concern. Thus, the goals that the movement aims to advance (better regulation or abolition of factory farming, animal research, use of animals for

¹ Animal advocates and scholars disagree about the legitimacy of welfare initiatives (those activities that try to reduce animals' suffering but not end the industry in which they are being exploited) as a meaningful route to address animal suffering (See Francione and Garner 2010). My use of the term animal advocacy encompasses welfare initiatives not to signal the endorsement of these initiatives, but to include them for the concern about animals and the work of women movement participants they represent - both of which I argue deserve greater recognition by feminist intersectionalists.

entertainment, etc.) should be understood as feminist issues not just because of the links between the oppression of marginalized humans and animals that existing animal theory has already demonstrated, but also because the majority of animal advocates are women whose experiences with animal advocacy is adversely inflected by gendering and other differentiating dynamics and processes.

After arguing for this association of the animal advocacy movement as a women's movement, I want to revisit some of the current internal debates within intersectional theory canvassed above. I do so to explain why concerns advanced in these debates do not foreclose the consideration of species difference as one of the sites/axes/grounds of difference to which intersectionalists should attend. That is to say, current concerns expressed by intersectionalists regarding the scope of intersectionality should not act as a bar to including species difference as an acceptable and routine ground within intersectionality theorizing and politics. As this Part will reveal, there is no theoretical impediment for feminists to take up the animal question and engage with animality and species differentiation as part of a feminist intersectional analysis. While, of course, conflicts may arise between how to proceed on any specific issue (as they do in current intersectional situations where multiple difference-based interests may be at stake), there is no general drawback to intersectionality's stated goals to view the animal advocacy movement as a women's movement giving rise to feminist intersectional issues.

To recap, I thus have two central and related arguments: 1. the animal advocacy movement is a women's movement (and, thus, this is a further reason that intersectionality should incorporate species as an axis of difference as part of its theoretical model); and 2. there is no substantive barrier preventing the adoption of species difference into feminist intersectional understanding of social issues, which, in turn, enables the recognition of the animal issues as feminist ones. With this in mind, in Part I, I will first briefly explore what are considered typical women's issues and then go on to articulate how the animal advocacy movement is gendered and intersectional. In Part II, I will explain why the internal debates within intersectionality pose no theoretical impediment to the inclusion of species as a recognized axis of difference. As such, feminist intersectional praxis is not imperiled by the recognition of the animal advocacy movement (hereafter animal movement) as a feminist movement or of the issues it champions to end animal suffering as, broadly speaking, feminist ones.

Part I. The Animal Movement as a Women's Movement

A sampling of the gender, race, and class issues prominent within the animal movement helps to educe the movement's qualification as a women's movement. Various academic scholarship has already illuminated the significant links between oppressions of animals and marginalized human groups, such as women (Adams 1990, 2003; Gaard 1993; Adams and Donovan 1995; Donovan and Adams 2000, 2007; Donovan 2006; Gruen 2008; Kheel 2008; Oliver 2009). How these intersectional issues circulate *within* the animal movement provide another reason the mainstream feminist humanist community should view animal issues as feminist issues and animal advocacy as a women's movement. However, before

delving into this feminist and intersectional reading of the animal movement as a women's movement, it is useful to consider the types of issues that have been embraced as typical women's issues.

a. Typical Women's Issues

While there is disagreement over what exactly qualifies as a women's issue or women's interest (Molyneux 1998), a perusal of academic texts introducing students to women's studies reveals the repetition of certain standard subjects as women's issues (Mazur 2002; Grewal and Kaplan 2006). In her paper on why bankruptcy should be considered a women's issues, Elizabeth Warren (2002) outlines two categories of what gets labelled as typical women's issues: 1. physical differences between sexes, such as abortion and birth control, and 2. issues related to sexual violence and care work. Along these lines, Maxine Molyneux (1998) makes the distinction between practical and strategic interests. The former are centred on the satisfaction of needs arising from women's societal placements, whereas the latter are claims to transform social relations and enhance women's positions within society. Molyneux (1998, p. 233) notes that the "formulation of interests, whether strategic or practical, is to some degree reliant on discursive elements, and is always linked to identity formation". Pressing a similar point, a number of scholars have advocated for the extension of the boundaries of women's issues beyond the "typical" ones of abortion, sexual assault, domestic violence, childcare, and others (Finley 1989; Kim 2009, Saguy 2012). Moreover, attention has shifted to conceptualizing women's interests as gendered interests, a move meant to signal recognition of a fluid, historically contingent and socially constructed concept of women's interests, as well as an interest in recognizing women's efforts to address multiple systems of social injustice (capitalism, globalization, racism, etc.) as part of a feminist agenda (Molyneux 1998; Maddison 2004; Vincent, 2010).

While these articles attempt to significantly extend what is conventionally defined as a women's issue, they retain humanist parameters to the exclusion of nonhuman animals. The plight of female nonhumans and their oppressions are cast as disconnected to women's issues. Furthermore, and the point I wish to emphasize here, the typical women's issues do not incorporate the women within the animal rights movement. These women face gendered and intersectional issues that should be recognized as women's issues such that their experiences and aims as a movement should qualify the animal movement as a women's movement.

b. Animal Movement is Gendered and Intersectional

The animal movement is gendered and intersectional in a number of ways. First, participation in the movement is gendered with women making up the vast majority of activists. Second, women's experiences within the movement reflect gendered and intersectional issues.

I. Gendered Participation

Women have historically and continue to participate in disproportionately higher numbers than men in various forms of animal advocacy (Herzog and Golden

2009; Gaarder 2011). Emily Gaarder in her book, *Women and the Animal Rights Movement* (2011), cites a number of academic studies from the United States that show women outnumbering men among activists engaged in the animal rights movement; these studies indicate participating rates ranging from 68% to 80%. This is reflective of the historical prominence of women in the most prominent early British animal protection organizations where they made up 70% to 75% of participants. Another example illustrating women's dominance in the movement is that 78% of subscribers to *The Animal Agenda*, an animal advocacy news magazine in circulation for the past 25 years, are women (Herzog 2007). This disproportionate participation of women is also reflected in attitude surveys about animal issues indicating that women are more supportive of animal movement causes across a range of cultural contexts (Herzog, Betchart and Pitmann 1991; Galvin and Herzog 1992; Kendall, Lobao and Sharpe 2006; Herzog and Golden, 2009; Phillips et al., 2011).

II. Gendered and Intersectional Issues that Women Face

While women dominate in animal movements across the world, they still encounter gendered experiences in the movement, which, are further complicated by class and race dimensions. These issues are present within the movement, how the movement is received, and in the rational-emotional dichotomy that undergirds women's participation.

Within the Movement

The gendered division within the movement is publicly reflected in the fact that the leadership and well-known figures within the movement tend to be men, even though women clearly represent the majority of the movement. Herzog (2007) captures this pattern by highlighting that 60% of the authors reviewed in *The Animal Agenda* are men and 60% of the activists profiled were men. Furthermore, he cites how 65% of the intellectual and political leaders written about in *Animal Rights: History and Scope of a Radical Social Movement* were men. While Lyle Munro (2001) affirms that there has been a gradual shift towards more women leaders in the movement, they continue to be underrepresented compared to their numbers. Interestingly, Herzog notes that organizations focused on animal rights are more likely to be led by women than those with an animal welfare or shelter orientation, which he suggests may reflect different financial resources. This potentially reflects another gendered element, in that women reach leadership positions in organizations that tend to have fewer financial resources and less influence as a result.

While the numbers represent an obvious gendered division of labour, the differential values associated with the work that women and men do further enforces this division. Gaarder's study (2011) demonstrates how women manage day-to-day tasks, while men perform acts that get labelled as "heroic". In particular, men do the more confrontational and often illegal activities that capture attention and establish reputations. In this way, women's labour and roles within the movement tend to be marginalized. Women face traditional sexist attitudes again in the advertising campaigns employed by certain factions of the movement,

which employs sexist imagery to create sensationalist advertisements in the hopes of raising awareness. It is, however, difficult for women to complain about these issues for fear of risking the movement's reputation and focus. For example, Gaarder notes how challenges to masculinist leadership positions are shut down for fear of detracting from the goals of advocating animal rights. Women who wish to illuminate the sexual harassment by men in the movement to receive the same dismissive response, being told that they are raising a "human concern," which detracts from the animal movement (Gaarder 2011, p. 100). Those who wish to stand against various forms of oppression along with speciesism are also marginalized.

Reception Outside of the Movement

In addition to the gendered and intersectional issues within the movement, there are a number of these issues present in how the movement is received more broadly. These revolve around the credibility and legitimacy of the movement. The following aspects of the movement's public status illustrate its gendered and otherwise differentiated dynamics: 1. how activists and the movement are stigmatized, 2. the gendered significations and public expectations of the movement, and 3. how women animal movement participants themselves understand the movement's legitimacy.

Stigmatization of Activists and the Movement

The stigmatization of the animal movement is widespread (Sorenson 2009, 2011). A significant generator of the stigma applied to animal advocacy occurs through identitarian claims whereby activists are depicted as lacking credibility because of their social status in society. Rachel Einwohner (1999) documents, for example, how hunters dismiss activists as ill-informed about hunting because of their (higher) class and (feminine) gender. As Gaarder notes (2011), at times, negative responses to activists can rise to the level of overtly discriminatory (sexist, racist and homophobic) remarks. Calls for the adoption of animal-free diets have also been met by vigorous critiques about the race and class privilege of activists advocating for vegan and vegetarian diets (Bailey 2007). Indeed, where an advocacy for a particular animal-free practice such as veganism is perceived (rightly or wrongly) by the mainstream animal-eating public to be aligned or associated with an elite racial, culture and/or class group, those activists who are from non-elite race, cultural and/or class groups can face a certain degree of exclusion from these identity groups to which they otherwise belong. To illustrate, Gaarder (2011, p. 72) cites the case of a Mexican-American woman who is labelled as giving up her cultural identity and becoming "whitened" for her involvement in the animal rights movement. She also cites an example of a lesbian woman being told her involvement in the animal rights movement "would give gays and lesbians a bad name". These experiences of stigmatization reflect intersecting discrimination.

Gendered Significations and Expectations of the Movement

In addition to the stigmatization of activists and the movement, there are gendered expectations from outside the movement regarding women's roles and

their proclivity to take up animal work and ethical living in relation to animals that shape women activists' experiences in the animal movement. For example, Einwohner's study (1999) shows how circus patrons confronted by animal rights activists associated compassion and nurturing aspects with the women activists. Moreover, women in Gaarder's study (2011) indicated that it appeared easier for them to choose ethical diets because of larger social gendered expectations disciplining women to control and limit their diets to conform to body image ideals for women to which they were habituated.

Here, it is instructive to recall how closely meat eating is associated with power and both mirrors and advances patriarchal values in western societies (Adams 1990). Traditional notions of dominant femininity thus affect the mainstream public's comprehension of why individuals would choose to advocate for animals against conventional practices as well as how activist women understand their own animal activism.

These gendered expectations of women within the movement draw from problematic naturalized idealizations of women with affective labour and docile, diminishing bodies. Moreover, they affect how women within the movement assess their own (impaired) credibility as advocates and contextualize their strategically formed views that the movement would benefit from increasing the participation of men (Gaarder 2011). Such strategies, however necessary, exemplify the continued marginalization of women due to the tightly gendered significations of animal advocacy.

Rational-Emotional Dichotomy

These conceptualizations of credibility belie the rational-emotional dichotomy that pervades the discourses surrounding the animal advocacy movement and is, perhaps, its most unshakeable association. Under Cartesian dualistic thinking, notions of rationality, reason, and who in society possessed the ability to reason, were prime rationales to exclude whole categories of humans and nonhumans from moral and legal personhood. The residual legacy of the Cartesian premium on reason and corresponding abjection of its understood opposite – emotion – continues to taint those humans and nonhumans who are associated more strongly with emotion than (if, at all) with reason. This residual effect on affect is apparent in the image the animal movement seeks to project in the public sphere.

Gaarder (2011) notes how the initial impetus for all the women in her study to join the movement was an affective/emotional one, followed by a process of learning and reading more tightly connected to reason only later. Yet, while the women's reasons for joining the movement were based on affective responses to animal suffering, once in the movement, they nonetheless attested to a need to employ intellectual and scientific arguments to convince the public of the legitimacy of their claims. To fortify the association of their cause with reason and rationality, animal organizations often chose (white, educated) men to speak for the group. Moreover, Sorenson (2010) discusses how exploitation of animals associated with minoritised racialised cultures have received disproportionate attention within mainstream media even when they are not much different in terms of the pain and suffering involved from mainstream methods of exploiting animals.

These examples illustrates how the traditional disparaged association of women and racialised others with emotions, along with the concomitant privileged association of white men from a certain class with reason, shapes the public messaging of the movement in terms of who serves as its spokespersons and which causes receive favourable attention in the public sphere. The rational-emotional dichotomy plays a significant role in creating and perpetuating the influence of multiple axes of difference within the animal movement.

The purpose of this brief snapshot of the types of issues women participants grapple with in the animal movement demonstrates the gendered and intersectional dimensions integral to it. These dimensions confirm why the animal movement should be recognized as a feminist movement in addition to the fact that women disproportionately populate the movement's rank and file. While further intersectional scholarship and incorporation of intersectional oppressions within the politics of the movement would be valuable to more fully address the power differences shaping the movement, the gendered and intersectional issues that are already apparent provide sufficient reason for feminists to consider the animal movement as an intersectional women's movement worthy of feminist support. The next section considers whether any reasons exist given recent debates in intersectional theory that should bar this consideration.

Part II. Species as an Axis of Difference within Intersectionality

While intersectionality is unique in its open-ended approach to which differences matter, there is relatively little written on species as a critical social differentiator. Indeed, a presumptive norm of the literature is anthropocentrism. As I argue in this section, this ongoing paradoxical exclusion of the nonhuman is not necessary to the goals of intersectionality and can, instead, undermine them. I return to several major recent internal debates within intersectionality introduced earlier to outline some of the theory's most pressing current concerns and show how none pose barriers for an intersectional analysis to move beyond its human limit and transcend the systemic species boundary intersectionality has so far maintained. A path is thus clear to consider the animal movement, and its concern about animals' lives, as a feminist movement.

a. Recent Debates within Intersectional Literature

There are multiple, recent points of debate concerning intersectionality (Garry 2011). Here, I focus on three that engage the proper parameters of the theory. In particular, it is not clear whether intersectionality is a theory, a concept, a heuristic device, or a reading strategy for doing feminist analysis; it has been used in all of these ways (Davis 2008). This ambiguity regarding what intersectionality is has stimulated specific debates about the following: what imagery should be employed to conceptualize intersectionality; the role of categories; and whether a specific marker of difference should be central to an intersectional analysis. Each debate is discussed below.

First, agreement on the best image to illustrate intersectionality has proven elusive. The first conceptualization in the literature that Kimberlé Crenshaw (1988)

presented was a traffic metaphor of roads intersecting. Nira Yuval-Davis (2007) argues that this crossroads imagery is inherently additive and fails to capture how interacting identities are inseparable and mutually reinforcing. Along similar lines, Julia Jordan-Zachery (2007, pp. 260-261) argues that the conceptualization of intersectionality as “interlocking” oppressions implies that the systems can be disentangled, which fails to recognize that they are enmeshed and intertwined. On the other hand, as Dhamoon (2010) discusses, other scholars prefer the “interlocking” model as it recognizes how systems of oppression are locked together in various forms of hierarchical ordering. Some scholars have criticized this range of theoretical variation, worrying that it precludes a standard methodological approach to researching intersectionality. Others argue that there is no need for a single, universally agreed upon concept and that the focus should be on an awareness of the critical capacity of the chosen concepts and openness to changing these models as theories develop (Garry 2011).

The different models for conceptualizing intersectionality reflect a second element of the debate, which involves the critical role of categories (Hancock 2010, Garry 2011). Some scholars have argued that the categories of difference around which the theory revolves reproduce the very essentialisms that intersectionality seeks to redress. Instead of being viewed as dynamic processes, they come across as relatively fixed categories. Richard Delgado (2011) indicates that this may be inherent to intersectionality, suggesting that it presupposes essentialism largely because of its focus on categories of difference. On the other hand, Jennifer Nash (2008) views categories as more of a problem of academic practice rather than inherent to intersectionality as a concept. She argues that the way scholars perform intersectionality research tends to apply additive approaches that produce essentialised categories, but that this approach can be revised. Dhamoon (2010, p. 233) also recognizes the essentialising effect of categories in noting how an intersectional analysis “can end up reiterating the very norms it aims to challenge”. She argues that a focus on processes and systems instead of individuals and groups can help avoid this situation. Echoing this sentiment, Lisa García Bedolla (2007) argues that models of intersectionality need to be mindful of essentialising the very categories that are being challenged.

In addition to the concern about the reification of categories, a third point of debate is whether a particular marker of identity or a particular object should be at the centre of an intersectional analysis. For example, some have argued that class should command the centre in a hierarchy of oppressions as the principal social axis of difference, with others falling below it (Bilge 2010; Walby, Armstrong & Strid 2012). Others are reluctant to accept a presupposition of which inequality is central and argue for leaving this as an empirical question as each issue is addressed (Walby 2007). This point about analytical primacy underscores a larger critique that intersectionality’s methodology is seriously undertheorised; indeed, some contest whether it is even a methodology, distinguishing it instead as a framework (Garry 2011). While it has achieved “theoretical dominance as a way of conceptualizing identity” (Nash 2011, p. 3), its methodology/framework, as well as the conceptualization and categorical queries above, suggest considerable room for the theory to gain greater clarity and focus (Garry 2011; Nash 2011).

b. Why Species should be included as a Marker of Difference

This brief review of several main debates about the scope of intersectionality reveals that there is nothing within them to argue against the inclusion of species difference or the consideration of nonhuman lives at the individual or institutional level. The first concern about the ideal metaphor to capture the theory's central thesis is neutral about which differences should matter. Rather, it is simply a concern about how to signal the mutual constitution of differences and their complex interactivity in an accessible way. If species difference were included in the mix as easily as gender, race, and class are, we would quickly acknowledge that our human species identity mixes inextricably with these other "classic" differences such that our experiences as a gendered, racialised and classed being, for example, take their timbre from our equally relevant identity as a human. Indeed, that so many human claims to injustice pivot on experiences of dehumanization and the stigma of being perceived as subhuman or animal by the dominant human community illustrates how much concepts of gender, race, and class are inflected with species significance as well as how productive including species as an analytic can be for unpacking marginalizing dynamics.

The second conceptual debate canvassed above pertaining to the tendency of some intersectional theorists to reify categories of difference despite contrary intentions, also does not contain any strong argument as to why species difference needs to be excluded when intersectionalists consider difference. If anything, challenging the human-nonhuman boundary would undo a key essentialised category within the theory. As many writing in relation to the field of animal studies have shown, the human is not a stable marker of identity, but a fiercely historically and culturally contingent one (Castricano 2008; Wolfe, 2010; Pedersen 2012). Moreover, treating this species status as an identity in need of deconstruction along with norms of whiteness, masculinity, heterosexuality, and other privileged identities, would reduce essentialising within intersectionality rather than promote it. Furthermore, adding species as another entry to the list of markers of difference to consider within an intersectional analysis is not to suggest that it be a pre-eminent factor or always important to analyzing a particular phenomenon. Rather, it could simply be another category of difference to bear in mind where relevant.

With respect to the third debate about which difference merits more prominence in the theory, it is difficult to defend a position that discounts the salient of species identity in shaping our cultural, legal and political treatment. If race and gender have widespread influence, surely species is implicated in power differentials as well. To take a dramatic example, humans are legally classified as persons with rights while animals are classified as property (the object of rights) in the law. It is true that the cultural divide between humans and animals contains more scope for movement across the species boundary line than the legal one. Consider the "humanized animals" that are treated as family members and the "animalized humans" whose humanity is not recognized to the same extent as those seen as fully humans (Wolfe 2003, p. 101). Yet, despite the presence of animals who are treated like humans and humans who are treated like animals, strong cultural codes

continue to teach us to value humans at a higher level than animals such that we immediately understand the negative implication in treating someone “like an animal”. The animal is the cultural marker by which we define that what it means to be human, a definition that carries cultural values of human superiority and privilege (Oliver 2009).

Even if it is conceded that species is a supremely salient difference, equivalent or exceeding the ubiquity of race, gender and class, it is necessary to ask would a further entry to the list of socially relevant differences present another problem to intersectional analysis. Delgado (2011) presents an interesting criticism of intersectionality as a double-edged sword where it may permit organization of the marginalized but can also be utilized by conservative forces to further marginalization. Delgado argues that intersectionality may undercut progressive arguments by delegitimizing analyses that may have missed a particular category of difference. He seems to argue that no matter how in-depth your analysis is, it is likely a smaller unit of analysis is possible. In other words, further intersections can be found within your categories of analysis, thus exposing intersectional arguments to attack for excluding these smaller units. Moreover, the focus on smaller and smaller units of analysis may prevent a more complete account of systemic and systematic patterns of oppression. These aspects of intersectionality go towards serving powerful interests by paralyzing progressive arguments. In this way, a focus on multiple (and never-ending) differences can be a tool of empowering the powerful.

Delgado raises an important concern about the political risk of further complexifying intersectionality through the addition of yet another difference axis. However, an intersectional analysis need not require attention to each and every possible different marker. Rather, an intersectional analysis could be a framework for deconstructing power relations within society. Ange-Marie Hancock (2007) reinforces this view by articulating how over time her initial conception of intersectionality as a content-based specialization on specific identities and subjectivities has shifted to understanding it as a normative and empirical paradigm. In other words, intersectionality can be applied more broadly from studying particular groups exhibiting intersecting marginalized identities to examining institutional interactions and contexts. Indeed, Hancock asserts that intersectionality has traditionally taken racialised women as its favoured group study, but that its potential as a normative paradigm reaches much further. The specific differences that a researcher should focus on will come into view with the particularities of each given project. Although the risk remains that an intersectional analysis can be undermined for not being intersectional enough, it still seems a more palatable option than a unidimensional analysis because it better captures realities of power relations and more fully illustrates the complexities of identities.

Furthermore, the integration of posthumanist concerns into intersectionality counters the critique that scholarship in the field tends to neglect studies about the analysis of identities that are either wholly or partially privileged. Scholars have articulated the need for problematizing relationships of power for unmarked categories, such as whiteness, masculinity, heterosexuality, and other privileged

markers of identity (Choo & Ferree 2010; Garry, 2011; Nash 2011). Dhamoon (2010, p. 235) identifies this problem when she says that research should shift from “the Othered identity and category of Otherness to a critique of the social production and organization of relations of Othering and normalization”. She further discusses how the focus on uncovering oppressions among humans tends to present static understandings of individuals that preclude recognition of agency. Instead, Dhamoon (2010, p. 238) argues for an approach that studies interactive processes and structures in which “meanings of privilege and penalty are produced, reproduced, and resisted in contingent and relational ways”. Others have echoed this call to encourage research that focuses on how situations are dynamic and relational as well as studies that address how privilege and power can reside in and shape experiences of marginalization (Nash 2011).

A consideration of human relationships with animals and the circuits of power that flows in them would go a long way to generating this shift in focus. It would demand (human) exploration of our privileged identities vis-à-vis other species given our highly anthropocentric world. It would also illuminate how we all exercise agency in our relationships with animals no matter how oppressed we may be ourselves. Considering species as part of the regular repertoire of differences to which intersectional analyses normally attend could also reduce the impugned phenomenon of the “Oppression Olympics,” in which groups seek to define themselves as the “most oppressed” for political purposes (Hancock 2007; Yuval-Davis 2012). The extent of violence that humans perpetrate on animals on a daily and global basis makes any claims about being the “most oppressed” difficult to justify.

As is apparent from this brief review of recent conceptual debates in intersectionality theory, there no compelling reason exists to justify the current exclusion of species from the difference mix that animates intersectional critiques. In fact, including species difference and animal lives as elements of theorization and mobilization help complicate understandings of privilege and forward the impact of intersectionality as a normative paradigm – to use Hancock’s term – to handle cutting-edge, particularly post-humanist, questions of justice.

Conclusion

My goal in this article has been to present two interconnected arguments: 1. the animal movement is a feminist movement; and 2. species should be incorporated as a relevant marker of difference within the discourses in the intersectionality literature, thus enabling this response to the animal movement. In Part I, I discussed the multiple reasons that the animal movement should be seen as a feminist and women’s movement. The movement is dominated by women who experience gendered and intersectional issues, both within the movement and from outside. Within the movement, women endure highly gendered patterns such as the division of labour between leaders and the ordinary members of the movement. Responses to the movement and women activists within it are also strongly shaped by traditional gendered roles as well as the reason/emotion divide that has been a foundational othering logic for multiple marginalized groups, both human and

animal. For these reasons, women's experiences and aims should be acknowledged as fitting the general paradigm of a women's movement.

The qualification of the animal movement as a women's movement serves to fortify the overall case why species as an axis of social difference should matter to feminists committed to intersectionality. This case has already been made by ecofeminists and other animal studies scholars who have demonstrated the interconnectedness of sexism, racism, colonialism, etc. with oppression against animals. The gendered and intersectional dynamics of the movement itself as discussed here provide a further reason that intersectionality should move past its humanist parameters. Despite the expansive consideration of intersectionality as a theory and the shortcomings it needs to address, humanism or an anthropocentric speciesist orientation has not been seen to be a weakness of intersectionality. The literature to date has remained focused on humanist parameters. This is particularly disconcerting since intersectionality is focused on incorporating elements of difference and how those differences fit into systems of oppression. A review of recent conceptual debates within the literature on intersectionality illustrate that there is no theoretical impediment to the inclusion of species difference within the discourse. Moreover, this type of posthumanist extension would further the goals of intersectional scholarship.

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