

This essay offers ecocritical discussions of animals in Shakespeare, in the spirit of the activist goals that ecocriticism cherishes. Balancing close readings with theory, the essay suggests reasons why animals have remained on the fringes of environmentalist and ecocritical discussions, and it brings animals into the discussion in viable theoretical ways.

Theory from the Fringes: Animals, Ecocriticism, Shakespeare

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Shakespeare studies have shown a huge interest in animals, though this interest has been thematic and not in any sense environmentalist. Mainstream ecocriticism, on the other hand, which is clearly environmentalist and oriented toward activist goals, has generally shown little interest in animals. Ecocritical readings of Shakespeare's animals are certainly new territory.¹

One of the reasons ecocriticism has been slow in coming to Shakespeare is that it has had some problems in defining itself, its goals, and its reach. Scholarly interest in animals, meanwhile, has remained on the fringes of ecocritical writing, the mainstream preferring instead to continue to pursue one of the inaugural goals of ecocriticism—namely, of recouping professional dignity for the “undervalued genre of nature writing” (Glotfelty xxxi). Even before ecocriticism had proclaimed itself a new critical method, interest in animals was on the fringes of environmentalist movements. Theories from the fringes of mainstream contemporary ecocriticism—such as those of Randy Malamud, Barney Nelson, and the increasingly supplanted ecofeminist corpus—have, however, produced significant scholarly dialogue about connections between environmental and animal issues.

This paper proceeds from the convictions that it is time to bring the fringes to the fore, “to move beyond the thematicism and symbolic readings that have characterized so much of the critical work on Shakespeare” (Estok 15), to discuss animals in Shakespeare in ways consistent with the activist goals ecocriticism claims to cherish, and to connect areas of activist scholarship that have often remained unconnected in mainstream academia. It is a tall order, and to fill it, this article moves back and forth between theoretical matters on the one hand and close readings of Shakespeare on the other. In the process, this paper contextualizes and builds on ecocritical attempts to produce viable theories connecting animal and non-animal environmental issues, and it retrieves activist implications in the drama.

While this is not the place for an extended critique on the state of ecocriticism (such critiques are easily found elsewhere),² any analysis claiming to be ecocritical must define the parameters of “ecocriticism.” Since its beginnings in 1996, ecocriticism has sought, but not found, “a paradigm-inaugurating statement like Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (for colonial discourse studies) or Stephen Greenblatt’s *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (for new historicism)” (Buell 1091). Nevertheless, activity in the field has been frenetic. As Sharon O’Dair argued at the British Shakespeare Association conference in September 2005, something such as “Green Shakespeare is a niche that is wide open. Hungry, even desperate to publish, graduate students and professors rush to fill it” (“Green” 1). While that frenetic scramble for ecocritical Shakespeares, in fact, *has not* yet happened, we can safely guess that it will, if the scramble for ecocriticism is any indicator.

While there has been no scramble, there was certainly a flurry of activity with “ecocriticism and Shakespeare” in 2005 and 2006: in May 2005, the journal *AUMLA* published my article, “Shakespeare and Ecocriticism: An Analysis of ‘Home’ and ‘Power’ in *King Lear*,” *ISLE* ran a Green Shakespeares “Special Cluster” in the summer of 2005, there was a seminar at the September 2005 meeting of the British Shakespeare Association entitled “Shakespeare and Ecology,” the University of Pennsylvania Press released Robert Watson’s *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* in January 2006, Routledge released Gabriel Egan’s *Green Shakespeare* in April 2006, and there was a panel session entitled “Ecocriticism and the World of Shakespeare” at the International Shakespeare Association’s 8th International World Shakespeare Congress in Brisbane in July 2006.

In the scramble to publish in the newly-made niche of ecocriticism, budding ecocritics have been careful *not* to be prescriptive, to be inclusive, to keep the field heterogeneous. The strategies of inclusivity have been so successful, however, that what

“ecocriticism” actually means and includes seems to have been lost along the way, and the paradigm-inaugurating stuff Buell sees ecocriticism as lacking has remained elusive. Nevertheless, we can make a few broad strokes to outline what ecocriticism does. Firstly, it is committed to effecting change by analyzing the function of representations of the natural environment in documents (literary or other). Secondly, it is committed to making connections. Thirdly, it is committed to plurality, and it embraces other activist theories. So, where do animals generally (and Shakespeare’s animals specifically) fit in?

If we assume that ecocriticism is ethically committed to promoting the health of the biosphere of which we and other animals are a part, then the many uses to which people put nonhuman animals must surely be important, especially given the degree to which these uses impact negatively on the well-being of the biosphere. Statistics on one of these uses, meat production, for example, are easily found³ showing that meat pollutes more, uses more resources, and causes more suffering in the world (not only in the form of pollution but in the form of extinctions) than non-meat-based diets. Animals are an ecocritical issue. This essay is concerned with animals as food in Shakespeare and with how *Titus Andronicus* and *2 Henry VI* challenge the acceptability of animals as food.

There is no question that a great deal of work looking at animal imagery and animal metaphors in Shakespeare has been done; ecocriticism, however, is activist by definition, and it is this activist goal that distinguishes what it does with animals from what other forms of literary scholarship do. Erica Fudge notes that “although current Shakespeare studies have thrown up some interesting analyses of animals in early modern culture, the study of animals here is [. . .] merely a means of further understanding the plays rather than further understanding the animals” (“Introduction” 7). While such a comment applies very well to Bruce Boehrer’s fascinating *Shakespeare Among the Animals*, Boehrer’s conclusion nevertheless opens promisingly onto ecocritical ground, predicting that “the ecocritical project will inevitably, and rightly, inform critical responses to [his] book” (181). Gabriel Egan’s *Green Shakespeare* seeks to be more consciously “ecocritical” from the start, to make explicit links with ecocriticism, and to be “political” (44); however, the handful of comments about animals scattered throughout seem more concerned about analogies and themes than about activist (presumably what Egan means by “political”) readings. To the extent that it deals with animals from an activist position at all, the book is concerned with the ethics of animal rights and animal liberation rather than with connections between animals and environmental ethics. It is decidedly anthropocentric. Egan notes that in Shakespeare, “human society is not so different from animal society” (102), “that we have much in common with animals” (107), and that “the more we discover about

animals, the harder it is to maintain the distinctions between them and us that have become so firmly entrenched since Shakespeare's time" (174). True though these statements are, they are not ecocriticism. Nor, for that matter, does Robert Watson's erudite volume come much closer to doing ecocriticism with Shakespeare's animals, apart from flirting with the topic of anthropomorphism. One set of comments Watson makes, however, in reference to *As You Like It*, warrants attention for the misunderstanding it reveals and endorses, both about ecocriticism and about animal rights.

Watson refers (without any apparent intended irony or critique) to "modern nature-lovers" (32), echoing the belittling and dismissive term *animal-lovers* used by detractors of animal rights. Watson's usage of the term *nature-lovers* is consistent with the anti-ecocritical tone the author seems to establish from the beginning of the book. Peter Singer has argued that the term "'animal-lovers' has had the effect of excluding the entire issue of our treatment of nonhumans from serious political and moral discussion" (xi). Using the term *nature-lovers* is inappropriate in a book that claims to do ecocriticism: ecocriticism is no more about schmaltzy appeals of the cuteness of animals or the loveliness of nature than animal rights is about sentimentalism (or inordinate love) for animals. While Watson is very accurate to observe that "the ethical quality of human relations [. . .] implicates the human relationship to other animals" and that our "shooting it [Nature] with arrows and shattering it into similes" raises questions that bring the drama of Shakespeare "into the active field of ecocriticism in a duly ambivalent way," he misses the shot and flies far wide of the mark when he begins talking about "the animal rights movement": "Though the deer-hunt scenes offer some emotional aid and comfort to the animal rights movement, the play as a whole undercuts that endorsement by demonstrating that such pervasive anthropomorphizing sentiments may invade and constrain the animal world more insidiously than sporadic open warfare—just as a Petrarchan worshipper can cause a woman more deep and protracted misery than a loudmouthed misogynist transient" (82). This is all very well, and no doubt true, but Watson seems to have missed an opportunity here to comment about how our assumptions about animals' impact on the natural environment, choosing instead to talk vaguely about some transhistorical "animals rights movement." Ecocriticism is not about sentimentalism, nor is it about animal rights in the way that Watson imagines. Ecocritical activism, as we will see below, goes further than simply recognizing continuities between human and nonhuman animals, and it goes further than "animal rights" or "animal liberation" (though these are clearly related issues and are not opposed to ecocriticism).

Often when we think of activism, we think of demonstrations, perhaps tear gas, large crowds throwing or shooting things at each other, and some large governmental

body eventually and reluctantly signing some new law. At least part of the activism that ecocriticism does, however, is simply in saying things that need to be said. Part of the success of the attempts of animal theorist Randy Malamud, for instance, “to help make amends for past deficiencies among literary scholars” (*Reading* 7) is to be found first in the very attempts themselves. Simply noting the more than three dozen references to dogs in relation to Jews in *The Merchant of Venice* is similarly an activist gesture when it connects speciesism and anti-Semitism; simply noting relationships between race, landscape, and animals as more than simply a curiosity of image co-locations in *Othello* is an activist move.

Still, theory and activism are difficult to reconcile. Malamud’s *Reading Zoos* is, to some degree, a response to Glen Love’s complaint that scholars have retreated “even further from public life into a professionalism characterized by its obscurity and inaccessibility to all but other English professors” (qtd. in Malamud, *Reading* 7). Merely writing about zoos from the premise that they are wrong is a radical move, but as with all literary theory, Malamud’s theory seems worlds apart from the political activism from which Love sees scholars as having retreated. Indeed, Dale D. Goble seems correct in his assessment that “the language [Malamud uses] does force someone outside the discipline to parse the sentences” (3), that Malamud is guilty of the very obscurity and inaccessibility that he seeks to remedy. Indeed, we may question the activist potential of any academic venture on the grounds that academic theory and political activism seem worlds apart; however, for scholars to make things available among other scholars is an important first step to making things available to students, and when these things are implicit calls for activism in canonical figures such as Shakespeare, the results are potentially radical.

In Shakespeare, animals often serve to define the parameters of the “human,” while at the same time ambivalently enlisting the audience’s “awareness of sentient, cognitive, ethical, and emotional affinities between people and animals” (Malamud, *Poetic* 9).⁴ At times, so poignant are the representations of the general theme of the ethical intertwining of human and nonhuman animals and so complex are the involvements of the natural physical environment in the drama that it is virtually impossible to avoid a political reading. *Titus Andronicus* seems to demand one. It implicitly questions human domination of nonhuman animals by drawing such close analogies between the two, analogies between the heavily gouged Lavinia and the earth ripped wide into loathsome pits and burial sites, analogies spectacular for their images of blood, gore, and suffering. An activist ecocriticism will take the cue and will read for resistance and its implications in a play such as *Titus Andronicus*.

Before reading for such radical resistance in Shakespeare, though, one must assume firstly that the early modern period is relevant to “current ethical, environmental, social, and political debates,” which is certainly the assumption Erica Fudge maintains in her writings about the history of animals (“Introduction” 10). Another assumption is that it is not all right “to systematically exploit and kill nonhuman animals simply because of their species” (Wolfe 10). Both of these quotations come from writers who neither identify as ecocritics nor reference the work of ecocritics deeply in their work; yet, both Erica Fudge and Cary Wolfe clearly advocate an activist scholarship.

What counts as ecocritical ethics that include animals is carefully laid out in activist terms by Randy Malamud in *Poetic Animals and Animal Souls* under five general categories: such ethics, Malamud argues, should encourage people, 1) to see animals without hurting them; 2) to understand animals “in their own contexts, not in our contexts”; 3) to teach “about animals’ habits, their lives, their emotions, their natures, as much as can be done from our limited and biased perspective”; 4) to advocate “respect for animals, on their own terms”; and 5) to develop “a culturally and ecologically complex, problematized vision of what an animal means” to replace definitions currently employed (44, 45). What is interesting here, though, is the absence of any mention of diet or clothes. Surely, it is in the clothes we wear and in the food we eat (as Fudge has also argued in “Saying Nothing” 70) that we have our most immediate day-to-day contact with animals?

A play such as *Titus Andronicus* radically challenges a meat-based dietary philosophy and encourages environmental activism precisely through such a challenge. It is not merely that women and people of colour are associated with animals and that we see the horrors that come from such associations in the play. It is not merely that Demetrius compares Lavinia to a doe (2.1.93–94), and Aaron the Moor, quick to perceive this weakness for dehumanizing metaphors, advises the two brothers to go in for the kill, so to speak, saying that

The forest walks are wide and spacious,
And many unfrequented plots there are
Fitted by kind for rape and villainy:
Single you thither, then, this dainty doe,
And strike her home by force. (2.1.114–18)

It is not merely that Demetrius perceives Lavinia as a game animal and accords her a different kind of treatment than one would an equal human being, hoping “to pluck a dainty doe to ground” (2.2.27). The association of Lavinia with nonhuman animals places her as the central object of the predatorial gaze in this play, and certainly,

though other bodies are hacked up (including Titus's), the text lingers longer on Lavinia's body than on any other. All of this evinces a kind of fascinated horror and an ambivalent voyeuristic pleasure in the rape and the suffering—else it would be difficult to explain the presence of Marcus's odd rhetorical flourishes:

Alas! A crimson river of warm blood,
Like to a bubbling fountain stirr'd with wind,
Doth rise and fall between thy rosed lips,
Coming and going with thy honey breath. (2.4.22–5)

This is all very true and interesting, but it is very standard fare in the sense that it does not really seem to encourage any kind of activism. Certainly, also, Lavinia is measured out. Marcus portions her out as “a bubbling fountain,” as “rosed lips,” and as “honey breath”; Chiron and Demetrius “revel in Lavinia's treasury” (2.1.131); Titus names her “map of woe” (3.2.12)—everyone takes his cut of her subjectivity.

No less so are Aaron and Tamora othered with images fairly standard for the day in their bestializing gestures. Aaron and Tamora are both tigers (5.3.5; 5.3.195, respectively); Aaron is an adder (2.3.35) for his vengeful nature, a “hellish dog” (4.2.78) for his miscegenatory (and, according to the times, monstrous) relationship, and is “like a black dog, as the saying is” (5.1.122) for his hellish deeds. Tamora, his confederate, is a “most insatiate, luxurious woman” (5.1.88), presumably because of her sexual relationship with a black man, is barbarous, the beastly “dam” (2.3.142) of inhuman monsters. In short, *Titus Andronicus* is redolent with what Francis Barker calls “a language of monstrosity and bestiality” (148). All of this, Erica Fudge is accurate in claiming, begins “to upset the normal distinction that is made between human and animal” (“Saying” 84–85). But there is something far more subversive going on here, and though Fudge notes that there is a question about where the human actually is in this play, it seems that there is a different kind of question that is being raised. What accounts for the horror of Tamora eating “pasties” made of her own sons is that the audience, in fact, knows full well where the human is—namely, *at* the table and *on* the table (in the pasties). The horror is that we see the human and the nonhuman, each subject to the same rules of consumption. The question, after all of the blood, all of the gore, all of the suffering, all of the very direct comparisons between human and nonhuman is simple: from an ethical perspective, how do we dare sit down to the table to eat animals? This is radical and subversive drama at its best.

If ecocriticism encourages activism, an ecocritical reading of *Titus Andronicus* cannot but note the questioning of meat in the play. Such a reading, of course, has to rely on apparent behavioural and physical similarities between human and nonhuman animals, on some degree of anthropomorphism.

Humans, of course, are animals, and the distinction between human and animal is a false one, but obvious behavioural and physical differences between human and nonhuman animals compel the distinction. At the same time, though, we seek similarities, and anthropomorphism functions as a kind “of a perceptual strategy that is both involuntary and necessary” (Guthrie 51). Anthropomorphism is something we do and need to do whether we like it or not, something that is guaranteed at the moment that human language is used, something that it is both inevitable and useful.⁵ Arguing for the inevitability of anthropomorphic language, however, assumes that language is uniformly, invariably, and inescapably anthropomorphic; yet, such an assumption seems wrong and is comparable in some ways to suggesting that sexist language is generally inescapable. A few decades of concerted effort have removed a lot of sexist language. Still, there is virtually no escaping anthropomorphism. The debate in ethology (the study of animal behaviour) on anthropomorphism—its meanings and implications—has run into volumes and volumes. The basic and broadly agreed upon definition of anthropomorphism (see, for instance, Guthrie 51; Povinelli 92–93; Mitchell 151) is that it roughly describes the attribution of human psychological traits to nonhuman animals and things. Anthropomorphism is extremely useful, and, as Eileen Crist argues, it transforms and transfigures our understanding of the animals being described. Malamud argues that it “promises to elevate the status of animals in general cultural regard” because it is less easy to tolerate the suffering of nonhuman animals when their emotions, intelligence, behaviour, and feelings seem to resemble our own (*Reading* 37–38). Such is what allows *Titus Andronicus* to advocate a radical stance on meat. Radical though it is, it remains both anthropomorphic and anthropocentric.

Lorraine Daston and Greg Mitman eloquently explain that it seems impossible for any kind of anthropomorphism to escape the charge of anthropocentrism: “Considered from a moral standpoint, anthropomorphism sometimes seems dangerously allied to anthropocentrism: humans project their own thoughts and feelings onto other animal species because they egotistically believe themselves to be the center of the universe” (4). The debate is central to ecocriticism. At the 2003 Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) conference in Boston, Leo Marx and Lawrence Buell, on the second day of the conference, squared off against each other on this debate, Marx contending that people are “at the center of environmental thinking” and represent “the most responsible agent of environmental devastation.” Sharon O’Dair summarizes her take on the situation nicely in her 2005 article “*The Tempest* as *Tempest*: Does Paul Mazursky ‘Green’ William Shakespeare?,” arguing that “the most significant theoretical and practical question facing contemporary ecocriticism, as well as contemporary environmentalism, is whether the movement

should be, at base, ecocentric or anthropocentric: should protection of the environment be undertaken as a good in and of itself or should it be undertaken because of its use to humanity?" (116).

Of course, everything in the world *is* "nature," from bird nests to pop bottles, but this does not mean that the distinction between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism just dissolves. Gabriel Egan argues very convincingly for the importance of retaining the distinction between "human" and Nature: "If everything is nature [. . .], then nothing is, for the word has nothing from which to distinguish itself" (130). The distinction enables discussion of ecocentric actions (those that give priority to the nonhuman environment), performed from clearly and ineluctably anthropocentric positions (it is difficult to imagine arguing *from* any but anthropocentric positions). As long as we distinguish between human and nonhuman natures, the distinction between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism remains valid and useful.

In early modern England, there were huge efforts underway to define humanity, and, of course, nonhuman animals were the first line of attack. Erica Fudge, in fact, maintains that the anthropocentrism implicit in the very act of attacking animals (she cites bear-baiting) is evidence of anthropomorphism because it tacitly concedes its objects are able to feel pain as humans do: "Baiting is the most explicit and spectacular site of anthropocentrism in the early modern period, but it is also the most explicit and spectacular site of humanity's confusion about itself" (*Perceiving* 19).

Shakespeare participates both in resolving and exacerbating that confusion. Whole books have appeared and lives been devoted to Shakespeare among the animals, to his animals and monsters, to his animal-lore, to the metaphors he makes, to his doctrine of nature, to his analogies, and so on, but specifically ecocritical approaches to animals in Shakespeare have yet to offer anything substantial. It is not that there is a lack of material to work with; no, the cause is elsewhere.

Perhaps one of the reasons animals have largely been left out of the kinds of environmental discussions ecocritics have had is that they are, for many people, food and clothing objects. If this is true, if one of the reasons ecocriticism has been slow to discuss animals is that they are useful objects, then it is also equally true that animals function less as objects, function very differently in the environmental imagination than rivers and mountains and life forms less sentient than animals (such as trees). Animals are less static (or are imagined to be less so) than most non-animal life (and of course there are exceptions), and are therefore less fixed features of relatively static imagined environments. In this sense, animals are outside of the environment (or are imagined to be so) and are also often therefore outside of discourses about the environment.

Ecocriticism is increasingly clear about its intentions, and when we include animals in ecocritical discussions, the activist intentions suggest several things. From an ecocritical stance, scholarly work that looks at themes and counts image clusters is certainly useful concordance work, but it is unlikely to do very much actually to make the world a better place. Similarly, scholarly work that observes matters of metaphor, while very likely to offer interesting takes on a given author's artistic dexterity, seems very unlikely to do much in the real world—and for the purposes of this paper, I am assuming that there is a real world and that David Mazel leads us away from practical effectiveness in representing “the environment as a discursive construction” (xii); if the purposes are to effect real world changes through scholarly discussions rather than to engage in varieties of intellectual masturbation, then analyses of “animals” must ask broader questions and seek broader connections so that the results of our research might reach beyond an elite few.

Perhaps the most immediate question ecocriticism can ask is about how our assumptions about animals impact on the natural environment. If we assume that it is wrong to systematically exploit and kill nonhuman animals, then the ethics and implications of distinguishing between domestic and wild animals need to be addressed. Barney Nelson's *The Wild and the Domestic*, which explicitly aligns itself with an ecocritical line, focuses precisely on this dichotomy, arguing it to be a false one: “the more one really knows domestic animals, the less domestic they seem” (24), Nelson maintains. Surprisingly, though, Nelson stakes her ground not to argue against using animals but to argue against a dichotomy that results in restrictions on ranges of foraging for animals being exploited for human uses. Nelson's *The Wild and the Domestic* needs to be taken to task for tacitly endorsing an ethics of exploitation. And more broadly speaking, ecocritics on the whole (with very few exceptions) also need to be taken to task for not looking at how the continued use of animals for food, entertainment, forced labour, and so on, figure into environmental discussions. There are many reasons why it is tempting to dismiss Nelson's book out-of-hand. It is tempting to dismiss Nelson's book out-of-hand for its explicit and unquestioning sanctioning of the notion that nonhuman animals are “subservient to human needs” (Oerlemans 3). Nelson ironically quotes Oerlemans (and incorrectly references the quotation as page 1—see Nelson 40) discussing anthropocentrism: “that world view which turns all that is not human into an otherness subservient to human needs” (3). The irony is that precisely such a world view characterizes Nelson's text.

It is tempting to dismiss the book out-of-hand for its dumbing of academic discourse to a kind of Bush-like level, with comments that “Socrates, the guy who started rhetoric, said a writer should be a gadfly” (60), “cowshit creates memories” (111), and

so on. It is tempting to dismiss the book out-of-hand for its irrelevance: “I’ve always been a sucker for beady black eyes” (58); “I was kissed by a wolf once, too” (72); “I don’t like those fancy, shiny spiders with the long, skinny, pointed legs” (59)—each personal statement rides on the assumption that the reader should care about the author’s personal likes and dislikes and that these are somehow relevant to ecocriticism. Yet, Nelson’s suggestion to dismantle the domestic/wild binary is important, regardless of its intentions, and Nelson’s discussions about the gendering of the wild and the domestic, of how “the West served as a place where easterners could test their manhood on local native women, animals, and the land” (57) should not be dismissed out-of-hand, tempting though it is at times. Ecocriticism has developed something of a history of simply ignoring, and thereby increasingly supplanting, ecofeminism.

For instance, though Greg Garrard talks about ways that “wilderness narratives deploy a gendered hierarchical distinction between wild and domestic animals in which the former are linked with masculine freedom, and, often, predation, while the latter are denigrated as feminine servants of human depredation” (150), very noticeably missing from his discussions are many fundamental insights of ecofeminism. Karen Warren receives barely a mention and certainly no more than lip-service discussion of her famous, and in some ways controversial, “logic of domination” argument. Warren reasons that the logic enabling and maintaining the domination of women is dynamically similar to the logic that supports the domination of the natural environment. There are, to be sure, logical flaws in drawing connections between an oppressed constituency capable of developing and using what Catriona Sandilands calls “transformative consciousness” (65) and an oppressed nature that is clearly *incapable* of such consciousness (and this is an argument that both Sandilands and philosopher Susan Feldman make, though in very different ways), but it is clear that “one of the tasks of ecofeminists has been to expose [. . .] the ways in which feminizing nature and naturalizing or animalizing women has served as justification for the domination of women, animals, and the earth” (Gaard 5). Ecocriticism has largely seemed to ignore and dismiss ecofeminism, sometimes on the grounds that it often falls prey to essentialism. Indeed, it is difficult to recuperate texts such as Susan Griffin’s *Woman and Nature: Roaring Inside Her* and Mary Daly’s *Gyn/Ecology* from charges of essentialism, but at the same time, it is vital to ask: “What is going on when texts such as these are labeled ‘essentialist’ and dismissed as regressive” (Carlassare 53). When we pick a book such as Garrard’s, we realize that the devaluing of ecofeminism looks suspiciously like the valuing and privileging of an arguably more male ecocriticism. Carol J. Adams isn’t even mentioned in the book. Adams, perhaps more than any single author, has argued on the gendering of animals and the animalizing of gender, on

the “overlap of cultural images of sexual violence against women and the fragmentation and dismemberment of nature and the body in Western culture” (40), and on the racializing and classing of meat, but not a reference, not a footnote, not a single word about Adams appears in Garrard’s “accessible volume” on ecocriticism in *The New Critical Idiom* series. Not a single word.

Avowedly vegetarian critics rarely appear cited in avowedly ecocritical manuscripts, articles, or conference papers, and animal rights activists are only nominally less on the lunatic fringe among ecocritics than in society at large. Moreover, how we talk about nonhuman animals often depends on an insanely contorted binaristic logic that separates us from them, in the process maintaining their object status and allowing us to eat and wear them, not to mention severely restricting the activist potentials of the theory. There are 255 million vegetarians in the world, more than 20 million of those in North America (1.3 million in Canada and 19 million in the US), and some of our most eagerly sought-after cultural icons (past and present) have much to say on the matter. It becomes absurd, when seen in this light, that Shakespeareans (with notable exceptions in people such as Stephen Greenblatt) primarily address Shakespeareans and that past presidents of Shakespeare associations actually lament the broadening of the scholarship and the breadth of the prospective audiences (see David Bevington). While some lament that increasing numbers of young scholars are coming “to find out what things really matter” (Bevington 1), there is no question that what those things *are* are *changing*.

If *Titus Andronicus* is one candidate for an ecocritical reading of Shakespeare’s animals, it is one among many. An activist ecocriticism will also look to *Henry VI, Part 2* and at what Annabel Patterson has called “a cultural tradition of popular protest” (38). The play participates in and subverts a popular radical vegetarian environmentalist ethic and offers “the garden” as a part of a continuum of control, of which violent assertions of power over sedition and over imagined social disloyalty are also a part. Far from being festive, the carnival atmosphere that blows through so much of this play finally rests on severed heads and puddles of blood. The garden is Nature stripped of its own order: it is power over Nature materialized. The order that is imposed on what is repeatedly conceptualized in the early modern period as unruly, chaotic, and threatening Nature is also imposed on Cade, the wild limb that is lopp’d off, the “trunk left for crows to feed upon” (4.10.84).

Cade, the text makes a special effort to inform us, eats grass and herbs (a rebel like a weed) in the quiet walks of well-maintained gardens. We are left to wonder about the compelled vegetarianism of Cade, characterized as the diet of losers in the

garden of Iden (and we are left wondering about how this might be a comment on, or critique of, the prelapsarian vegetarians in the Garden of Eden). The association of rebels and malcontents of one sort or another with diseased, disruptive, and Othered flora and fauna is repeatedly reinforced throughout the play: they are variously described as drooping corn (1.2.1–2), “a limb lopp’d off” (2.3.42), a droopy pine (2.3.44), a raven in dove’s clothes (3.1.75–76), a wolf in lamb’s clothes (3.1.77–78), “blossoms blasted in the bud” (3.1.89), gnarling wolves (3.1.192), labouring spiders (3.1.339), starved snakes (3.1.343), ravens in wrens’ clothes (3.2.40–44), “an angry hive of bees” (3.2.125), a kite (3.2.196), crab-tree fruit (3.2.214–15), infected air (3.2.287–88), lizards’ stings, serpent’s hiss, and boding screech-owls (3.2.325–27), “loud-howling wolves” (4.1.3)—all clearly not the favourites of plant and animal husbandry, not the features that are imagined to support the kind of well-being in Nature necessary for the production of aesthetic and economic commodities. And by placing the human on the same level as the morally inconsiderable natural world, these metaphors implicitly carry possibilities and permissibilities for mortal violence in their meaning.

Moreover, in the abundant comparisons between rebellion and certain images of Nature, we can see that “correspondences with the symbolism of popular culture are,” as François Laroque maintains, “deeply embedded in the imagery of the play, which insists so much on the parallels with the animal world that it is often close to a fable” (82). The cultural tradition of popular protest Patterson talks of sees the natural world as a kind of mirror for the privileged image of human subjectivity. It is here, within the space of human subjectivity, that the important things happen. Nature merely reflects, confirms, or opposes those things.

What until Act 4, scene 2 (the introduction of Cade) has at least some promise of potentially subversive drama dilutes into comic carnivalesque inversions that are contained, doomed to reaffirm the order they oppose, by trivializing their own positions. In some ways, the relationship between York and Cade resembles that between Prospero (Miranda, technically) and Caliban. Miranda teaches Caliban language, which he then uses to curse his oppressors; York plants the seeds of rebellion in Cade, but Cade is unable to mount an effective rising, a credible rebellion, or a tenable subversive threat. Still, the potential is as present with Cade as with Caliban, at least theoretically. And both Cade and Caliban are explicitly associated with a dangerous natural world (and both are vegetarian). Both become comic and effectively silenced and contained, shuffled to the fringe, but not without first voicing themselves and the dangerous natural worlds they represent.

Jonathan Dollimore argues against any notion of absolute containment, claiming that “to contain a threat [to social order] by rehearsing it, one must first give it a

voice, a part, a presence in the theatre as in the culture. Through this process the very condition of something's containment may constitute the terms of its challenge" (xxi). The subversive moments Cade opens up do not stand alone in the play. His vegetarianism is surely complicated by the correspondence between the butchery of people and the butchery of animals in this play, with Dick the Butcher erasing the boundary between the two and the king himself pleading for animals. Although the king is clearly speaking in metaphor, his very powerful condemnation of the conversion of animals into meat does give "a voice, a part, a presence" to a subverting of the enabling speciesism that sponsors meat production and consumption. Speaking of Gloucester's removal, the king asserts that

as the butcher takes away the calf,
And binds the wretch and beats it when it strays,
Bearing it to the bloody slaughter-house,
Even so remorseless have they borne him hence. (3.1.210–13)

Though the king makes such a plea, the overall action of the play works, as I have been arguing, to contain this subversive thinking in the very character from whose mouth it came.

Henry is a weak king, and his weakness is ideologically inseparable from his expression of sympathy for animals. If we recognize meat "consumption [. . .] to be the final stage of male desire" (Adams 49), the king's lack of virility and potency, neither of which come off as desirable, taint and are tainted by his animal rights sympathies. The subversive promise but ultimate containment of the play's critique against meat is part of a larger tradition that silences popular radical vegetarian environmentalist ethics, ethics that find spectacular expression less than a century later in the work of Thomas Tryon.

While hardly the "fervent exponent of vegetarianism" Andrew Wear claims him to be (129), Tryon certainly does take an ethical stand against the consumption of animal flesh. At his weakest, Tryon makes an embarrassingly anthropocentric attempt in *The Way to Health* to give voice to of the complaints of animals—"Cruel and hard-hearted Man! [. . .] We COWS give him our pleasant milk" (334, Y₇^V–336, Y₈^V)—effectively containing his subversive potentials in an instant. At his best, Tryon argues that meat is not necessary for the human diet; that meat-eating proceeds from the spurious assumption that if we did not kill and eat animals, then we would be overrun with them; and that there are many animals that people do not kill or eat and that we are not overrun by them (308, X₂^V).

The specious claims evoking environmental crisis and our need to kill animals to

avoid being overrun by them, like many of the claims against vegetarianism that Tryon counters, continue to arise from meat-eaters and meat industry people today in the twenty-first century. And when he argues that meat is disgusting, he tries to reduce the distance between the meal and the reality of its source by offering gory descriptions of meat (305, X₁^R). Our distance from the reality of the foods we eat is greater now than in the early modern period, the sanitized packages of little squares of flesh in the freezer and meat sections of supermarkets giving no sense of the animals from which the flesh came. If we are to eat flesh, such conceptual distancing is necessary. It is precisely in reducing the conceptual distance between “animal as animal” and “animal as food” that both Tryon and Shakespeare radically endorse an activist commitment to inspiring personal change, regardless of what kinds of ambivalent containment are at play in the works of each author.

While it is beyond the scope of my inquiry here to chart meaningfully the place of vegetarian ethics in popular protest movements in the early modern period, the topic was a very live one, both preceding and following Shakespeare, especially with the rise of scientific medicine and with meat increasingly being associated with questions of disease and illness. It is all the more surprising how little interest scholars have shown in connecting animal and environmental issues in Shakespeare.

It is one of the self-appointed tasks of ecocriticism to make connections, and one of the ways to do this is to recover contained subversive moments and challenges in writing from lesser known people such as Thomas Tryon to the most glossed and written about authors in history. Shakespeare’s plays obviously deserve far more ecocritical attention than is possible here. This article is an initiating gesture toward such analyses, and I have tried to show what ecocritical readings of animals in Shakespeare might look like. *Titus Andronicus*, for example, by exploiting the blurred boundaries between both human and nonhuman animals and between a mutilated natural world and mutilated women, radically asserts an almost choric distaste both for meat and for the patriarchal machismo and masculine militarism that ends up victimizing women (Lavinia, as mutilated rape victim; Tamora, mourning mother and, ultimately, cannibal of her own children) and the environment. The play’s bestializing of women and people of colour and humanizing of meat, I have argued, suggest an extension of moral considerability well beyond the human and certainly require ecocritical attention.

Both *2 Henry VI* and *The Way to Health* also interrogate the boundaries between human and nonhuman, though in a different way. Though each end up reinforcing the boundaries, both raise ethical and environmental questions and are relevant to praxis not because they raise questions never previously brought up; rather, they are

relevant *because* they bring the fringes to the fore and raise those challenges to a meat-based constituency in the first place. These are challenges that continue today, and it is time for ecocriticism to integrate them into theory and take animals out of the theoretical fringes. We *can* make a difference, not only in what we decide to eat and wear, but in how we talk about the natural world—and “animals” are central to those differences we can make.

NOTES

1/ This essay was supported by Sungkyunkwan University in 2007.

2/ Article-length retrospectives include Michael Cohen’s “Blues in the Green: Ecocriticism Under Critique,” *Environmental History* 9.1 (January 2004): 9–36; Simon C. Estok’s “A Report Card on Ecocriticism,” *AUMLA* 96 (November 2001): 220–38; and, most recently, Ursula K. Heise’s “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to Ecocriticism,” *PMLA* 121.2 (March 2006): 506–16. As Heise points out, “ecocriticism has [...] become a field whose complexities now require book-length introductions” (506) such as we get from Greg Garrard; Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005); and Walter Rojas Pérez, *La ecocrítica hoy* (San José, Costa Rica: Aire Moderno, 2004).

3/ Often, vegetarian organizations offer lists of statistics in shorthand form on their internet sites. More detailed accounts can be found in vegetarian cookbooks (Frances Moore Lappé’s *Diet for a Small Planet* seems to have begun this trend) and among philosophers such as Tom Regan and Peter Singer, but not yet among mainstream ecocritics.

4/ I have quoted Malamud out of context: he is discussing not Shakespeare but the value of empathy to expanding our experiential and epistemological sense of animals.

5/ See Pamela Asquith, “The Inevitability and Utility of Anthropomorphism in Description of Primate Behaviour,” *The Meaning of Primate Signals*, (Eds. R. Harré and V. Reynolds, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1984), 138–74.

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