

BETWEEN THE SPECIES

Biophilia: Alienation and Solidarity

ABSTRACT

Biophilia, theorized by Fromm, Wilson, and Kellert, is examined as a potential support for a pro-animal ethos. First, I look at the idea and its definitions at the hands of its chief theorizers. Then, I investigate how different stages of human cultural development (foraging, pastoralism, industrial agriculture) have influenced different aspects of biophilia—especially as this bears on animal alienation. Finally, I consider possible remedies in the form of renewed patterns of solidarity with other species, one of which transforms Marx' concept of species-being. This article has ethical implications, but it is essentially a work in philosophical anthropology.

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Animals offer [us] a companionship which is ... offered to the loneliness of [the hu]man as a species. —John Berger 1980, 4

Most arguments on behalf of an animal-friendly ethos proceed by attempting to enlarge our sense of altruism. We are enjoined to expand the moral community to include such-and-such other animals, sentient ones or sapient ones or some other delimitation. In this paper, I want to consider another argument to take other animals seriously, namely a prudential one of self-interest on behalf of human development: it will be seen that we harbor a need for affinity with other life forms and that if this biophilic tendency is not met sufficiently, we risk stunting our own growth and fulfillment. This perspective is not meant to occlude or cancel out altruistic rationales, but is offered as a strong supplement to the standard sort of argumentation. It can serve as a potent motivator, if we can show that human flourishing is partially dependent on positive association with other organisms. Now it turns out that biophilia is somewhat fragile, and can be overcome by certain forces of alienation spawned by our species' cultural evolution from foraging, to pastoralism, to industrial agriculture. Indeed, we are missing other life forms so much that an astrobiological fetish has arisen around the search for extra-terrestrial life—we yearn for discovery of and contact with alien organisms. I seek to remind us that we have already, on our own planet, a wonderful reservoir of lively diversity—we only need to build a renewed sense of solidarity with the larger animal kingdom to reap biophilic benefits again. To accomplish this, however, it may be necessary to redefine what Marx called our “species-being,” and I will suggest a promising way of doing just that.

But, first we have to start at the beginning and take stock of just what biophilia is. Although it is most often associated with

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late-twentieth century writings of the natural scientist Edward O. Wilson and the social scientist Stephen Kellert, the term “biophilia” was actually first used in the mid-twentieth century by humanities researcher Erich Fromm. He says of biophilia that “its essence is love of life in contrast to love of death” and that “the most elementary form of this orientation is expressed in the tendency of all living organisms to live” (1964, 45). By this he has in mind botanical self-subsistence, zoological survival, and human self-preservation (1964, 45). Going into the matter more deeply, Fromm explains that “living substance has the tendency to integrate and to unite; it tends to fuse with different and opposite entities, and to grow in a structural way”—this unification and integrated growth are characteristic of what he calls the “biophilous orientation” in both its biological and psychological manifestations (1964, 45f.). He goes on to say that “the full unfolding of biophilia is to be found in the productive orientation. The person who fully loves life is attracted by the process of life and growth in all spheres. . . . He enjoys life and all its manifestations” (1964, 46f.). Distinct from my interest in biophilia as a bridge between species, Fromm is most interested in its role as a kind of humanism: “Love of life underlies the various versions of humanistic philosophy” (1964, 48).

Fromm aligns biophilia with mental health (see Fromm 1964, 114, where he diagrams it into the “syndrome of growth” as opposed to the “syndrome of decay”), and thinks it is so significant that it is worth detailing its preconditions. Ontogenetically, “the most important condition for the development of love of life in the child is for him to be with people who love life” (1964, 51). Subsidiary conditions include: “warm, affectionate contact with others during infancy; freedom, and absence of threats; teaching . . . of the principles conducive to inner har-

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mony and strength; guidance in the ‘art of living’; stimulating influence of and response to others; a way of life that is genuinely interesting” (51). Socially, the conditions for biophilia’s development are abundance rather than scarcity, abolition of injustice, and cultivation of (especially positive) freedom (52). “Summing up,” Fromm indicates that “love for life will develop most in a society where there is: *security* in the sense that the basic material conditions for a dignified life are not threatened, *justice* in the sense that nobody can be an end [or a means] for the purposes of another, and *freedom* in the sense that each [hu] man has the possibility to be an active and responsible member of society” (1964, 52f., *italics original*).

Two decades later E. O. Wilson appropriated the term *biophilia* and redefined it with a special, centrifugal emphasis: he introduces it as “the innate tendency to focus on life and life-like processes” and later refers to it as “the urge to affiliate with other forms of life” (1984, 1, 85). Significantly, Wilson’s usage turns from Fromm’s anthropocentrism to a more biocentric notion: “Humanity is exalted not because we are so far above other living creatures, but because knowing them well elevates the very concept of life” (1984, 22).

This germ of an idea, planted by Wilson, was cultivated by others in the decades surrounding the turn of the millennium. Chief among these is Stephen Kellert, who claims that “the biophilia notion ... powerfully asserts that much of the human search for a coherent and fulfilling existence is intimately dependent upon our relationship to nature” (2013, 43). Indeed, Kellert places the concept near to the formation of identity: “The effective expression of the biophilia need may constitute an important basis for a meaningful experience of self.” (60) The phenomenon is expressed through nine dimensions

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of biophilic value: *utilitarian*, having to do with human sustenance, protection, and security; *naturalistic*, dealing with fascination, wonder, and awe at natural diversity (this includes curiosity, exploration, and an interest in outdoor fitness); *ecologicalistic*, involving precise study and systematic inquiry into nature and life (including observation and analysis); *aesthetic*, having reference to a positive impression of beauty in nature/life (as greater than artifice, displaying harmony, symmetry, and order); *symbolic*, having to do with means of facilitating communication and thought (providing a metaphor bank and an impetus to classify); *humanistic*, dealing with deep emotional attachment to individual anthropomorphs (revealed in care and nurturance, bonded altruism); *moralistic*, involving ethical responsibility and reverence for the natural world of life (including protection and conservation); *dominionistic*, having reference to a will to master nature and other life; *negativistic*, having to do with fear, aversion, antipathy to perceived threats or danger (including harm and cruelty) (2013, 45-56). I am leery of these last two categories. About them Kellert states that “even the tendency to avoid, reject, and, at times destroy elements of the natural world can be viewed as an extension of an innate need to relate deeply and intimately with the vast spectrum of life about us” (2013, 42). I am tempted, rather, to revert to Fromm here and to view such expressions as tied to what he called necrophilia (attraction to death and destruction) and thus not a part of biophilia (affirmatively understood).

Now one salient dimension of biophilia includes its moral upshot, and it is important to remember the roots of this aspect. Kellert puts it, “an ethical responsibility for conserving nature [and life within it] stems from more than altruistic sympathy and compassionate concern: it is driven by a profound sense of self-interest and biological imperative” (because biophilia

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is innate and necessary for thriving). (2013, 60) Other theorists also give testimony along these same lines. For instance, Martha Nussbaum, in explicating her capabilities approach to justice, catalogs the capabilities central to human dignity and flourishing—she includes reference to “*other species*. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature” (2011, 34, *italics original*). Likewise, Fromm states that “*biophilic ethics* have their own principle of good and evil. Good is reverence for life, all that enhances life, growth, unfolding” (here the reference to “reverence for life” is explicitly made with Albert Schweitzer in mind, see n. 9). (1964, 47) He elaborates the character-type associated with morality in this vein: “The biophilous conscience is motivated by its attraction to life and joy; the moral effort consists in strengthening the life-loving side in oneself” (1964, 47).

Just as biophilia can be seen as a ground of animal ethics, synergistic fashion animal ethics can be viewed as an inflection upon biophilia. Here it is helpful to notice that biophilia requires “environmental triggers” for full expression, and that it varies by culture and by individual in accordance with specific regimes of cultivation (Wilson and Kellert 2013, 230). One mode of cultivation could be ethical, and that would bring into relief the particularly moral facets of the various dimensions of biophilia. The utilitarian dimension, for instance, would be constrained by non-maleficence toward other organisms. The naturalistic expression would enhance reverence for all life. The ecologicistic side would deepen our sense of caring along the lines of the insight that we care about that which we know. The aesthetic dimension would breed a greater understanding of the intertwinement of beauty and goodness as it relates to biodiversity. An appreciation for our repository of animal memes would accompany the symbolic expression. Additionally, the

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humanistic side would aid in respectful guardianship of animal companions. Finally, the dominionistic and negativistic dimensions would be assuaged by an animal-friendly ethos.

As has been intimated already, biophilia is not a strongly innate tendency—it is not a determinant that will establish itself under any and all conditions. In particular, our cultural evolution as a species has had definite influences upon its expression. The general thought here is that a heightened sense of alienation from biodiversity and nature has accompanied our moves from foraging to pastoralism to agriculture (including its industrialized form currently regnant). This point can be overdrawn, as when we imagine some blissfully harmonious biophilia among Pleistocene hunters and see only alienation among high-tech moderns. The actual story is quite a bit more nuanced and complex, with different dimensions of biophilia being played up or down at different phases of cultural evolution. Let us survey some of these differences of emphasis in the broad history of our species.

Historian Richard Bulliet serves as a useful source for such a survey, for he identifies several stages in human-animal relations that map onto the development of human culture. (In addition to Bulliet's anthropological analysis, a full-scale treatment—beyond the scope of the present article—would require an economic examination that includes capitalism's effects.) First, there is a process of separation by which humans come to recognize themselves as a distinct species among others (2005, 40f.). This development does not spell a diminution in biophilia; in fact, it may constitute a necessary precondition for growing an affinity for other organisms insofar as one first has to recognize the difference between self and others to feel a linkage between them. The second step is the stage of pre-domes-

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tic culture that foragers inhabit, whereby “human groups went beyond their initial species consciousness and began to think of animals as objects for artwork, storytelling, and religious reverence” (2005, 41). Biophilia sees an uptick at this point, especially in the aesthetic, symbolic, and naturalistic dimensions. Next, there is the domestic stage that pastoralists and farmers inhabit; at this point animals become more useful to humans, but their spiritual qualities diminish (2005, 42). There is a rise in the utilitarian expression of biophilia and dominionistic tendencies are accentuated. Finally, there is the post-domestic stage at which industrializing humans and animals no longer live together (excepting pets). (2005, 42) Here much biophilia wanes and alienation from biodiversity rises due to migration to cities, replacement of draft animals, mechanization of farms, and destruction of forest and wilderness (Katcher and Wilkins 2013, 191). Let us take a second pass at cultural evolution, this time emphasizing the role played by humans vis-à-vis other animals. The oldest pattern is that of foraging and hunting. Gathering activities accent the utilitarian, naturalistic, and ecologic dimensions of biophilia. In order to make use of various plants and the kills of other species the gatherer must be stoked in curiosity and fully explore the terrain, being careful to discriminate (and thus classify) salutary from harmful or otherwise non-beneficial types of vegetal and zoologic sustenance. Hunting presents an interesting profile. There is a rich venatic tradition that stresses the solidarity hunters feel with their prey, sometimes characterizing the kill in spiritual and quasi-religious terms. A central feature of this account is the claim that the human predator performs certain rituals respectfully and gains permission from the prey species for killing and ingestion. I have a different take on this sort of behavior—I see it as alienating, inasmuch as it is a self-delusion that masks the reality of the prey’s desire to live. To pretend your intended

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prey wants predation to succeed is to put oneself, profoundly, at a distance from the actual will to survive and thrive that characterizes all animal life. Thus, on my view at least, hunter-gatherers display a rather mixed picture of biophilia and alienation.

Next comes the phase when humans act as pastoralists in relation to other animals. Herders emphasize the utilitarian and humanistic dimensions of biophilia. When you closely look after the care of animals used for various products, there is a tendency to anthropomorphize them as your (often childlike) charges. Note that this is also true for more sedentary farmers who raise livestock in close proximity to their own living quarters. Despite the intimacy of relations at this stage, there is also a strong admixture of alienation from the actual animals involved inasmuch as the herded or farmed animal, though dependent, does not remain juvenile but rather grows into its own integrity as an adult member of its species. The herder/farmer misses something of the animal's reality when s/he is neotenized in an anthropomorphic way. Once again, we see the operation of illusions in the human-animal interface. It would seem that the condition of heterotrophy prompts these delusions, because humans have found it difficult to acknowledge the situation as such or as naturalistic tragedy rather than domesticating the experience as one of willing sacrifice or dumb dependency.

The latest phase is that of industrialized agriculture: in moving from family farms to factory farms an emphasis on the utilitarian dimension of biophilia is retained and a stress on dominionism is added. Whereas the family farmer (or herder) could still relate to his animals in the capacity of caretaker or guardian, the factory farmer becomes much more like a master

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machinist of the abstract processes of livestock preparation and disassembly. The sheer density and mass of animals involved ensures this result of greater alienation, whereby persons in charge of processing must needs operate as master technicians on organisms that have been transmogrified into ersatz machines. The industrial scale of operations smothers any residual intimacy at the human-animal interface. Likewise, consumers of the animal products thus made are distanced from the animal realities of the products' sources: distanced physically in the separation of facilities from scenes of everyday life, and distanced cognitively in the creation of absent referents in the language used to talk about animal products (e.g., "steak" instead of "flesh", "beef" instead of "cow", etc.). Thus, we are confronted with a net gain in alienation.

One salient way this alienation registers is in the widespread, deep-going cultural phenomenon of searching for extra-terrestrial life. It is as if we are cut off from earthly life to the extent that we hinge our prospects of discovering significant otherness onto other planets. One NASA scientist avers "the public and the media respond more to stories about alien life than to anything else we do" (Grinspoon 2003, xvi). Likewise, an historian of science finds that "the question of extra-terrestrial life remains the most emotionally and ideologically charged issue associated with astronomy" (Crowe 1999, 557). To be sure, this concern of ours is seen to have ancient roots: the NASA scientist thinks that "the [alien] question goes way back. We've been wondering, speculating, fretting, hallucinating, and prognosticating about aliens about as long as anyone can remember. ... [For a very long time] we've had the capacity and the inclination to wonder whether there were others like us" (Grinspoon 2003, 6). A noted science fiction writer opines that "humankind's ancient fascination with aliens is built into our

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genes. There's evolution at work here. Meeting aliens has been a normal thing for humankind. ... We have dealt with alien intelligences for all of the time that humans have had brains" (Niven 1987, 4). My view is that this native impulse reaches new heights and attains the status of fetish (only) when we have undergone great alienation from the wide, wild biodiversity of other species here on Earth. We feel cosmic loneliness to the point of desperation (only) when we feel alone at home. As one thinker puts it, "one has the impression of being alone in an impersonal universe devoid of any foundational and ultimate solicitude and providential intimacy/meaning"; the world appears unfriendly and hostile and the subject feels absurdity and forlornness (McGraw 1995, 60).

Interestingly, we needn't pore over evidence of possible life from outer space—no, not when we have yet to explore all the weird and wild organisms that actually populate our own planet.

Precisely at the moment when we have overcome the earth and become unearthly in our modes of dwelling, [one commentator opines,] we need to restore our kinship with the animate world. We suffer these days from a new form of collective anxiety: species loneliness [recall this article's epigraph by John Berger]. ... Modern humanity yearns to reestablish and restore an ecology of shared identity. (Toomey 2013)

Indeed, here is where Hegel himself makes a famously feline grin (a la Chesire): the "[hu]man must define [it]self by what [it] is not". The idea, then, is that "an individual can define a human identity by means of a relationship outside those [s/]he has with [her/]his own group". (Slusser and Rabkin 1987, xix and xv)

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How are such (inter)relationships to be composed? Ecologist Michael Soule enters the scene with advice that is generalized but less abstract—he seeks to teach us that the womb of biophilism is bioregional communities with their tribal-pagan-forager wisdom plus related science/technology and sustainable land use (Wilson and Kellert 2013, 454). If the insights formulated above make sense, then “the effective expression of the biophilia need may constitute an important basis for meaningful experience of self” (Wilson and Kellert 2013, 60). In addition, the biophilia concept “calls for a common ethic of the conservation of nature” (Simalka and Samways, 905). (This happens when the implicit vitality of the whole biosphere and its myriad constituents get viewed through the lens of animism, something anathema to purely scientific theorists yet celebratory to those with a more capacious understanding of nature and life.) Underscoring a point I hinted at earlier, Kellert claims that “an ethical responsibility for conserving nature stems from more than altruistic sympathy and compassionate concern: it is driven by a profound sense of self-interest and biological imperative” (Wilson and Kellert 2013, 60).

Before we move forward with biophilia, let’s review the kinds of estrangement that have worked themselves into our experience of natural environs and the denizens that dwell therein. There are limiting factors, such as loss of biodiversity, extinction of hands-on/visceral contact, demise of oral stories (including plant and animal characters). This situation breeds disaffection, apathy, and irresponsibility toward nature (*The Biophilia Hypothesis* 2013, 233 and 239). Following Berger, first-world alienation from other animals is due to (human) migration to cities, replacement of draft animals, mechanization of farms, and destruction of forest and wilderness (Katcher and Wilkins 2013, 191). One famous psychologist unsurprisingly

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mentions more psychic phenomena: “Human self-awareness has made [the hu]man a stranger in the [natural] world, separate, lonely, and frightened” (Fromm, in *Mathehu’s Weblog*).

Assuming the condition of alienation is not salutary, how might we keep it at bay? In other words, how might we cultivate solidarity with the living world surrounding us? More than one commentator cites the overhaul of elementary education and indeed of childhood itself. Suppose every schoolchild chose a creature to study and report on repeatedly throughout elementary school--: “The capacity for bioaffiliation in the rising generation would be boundless.” (McVay 2013, 11) Short of that tactic, we could admit that “creating kinship with animals ... made the world a more comfortable place by reducing human isolation”; we could then seek to reincorporate direct sensory experience into science education—“the ability of living things to hold children’s attention should be used to help them learn how to understand the living environment, respect the appearance of the world, and take responsibility for its care” (Katcher and Wilkins 2013, 187 and 192). Boons for biophilia include bioregional practice and eco-education on a local level(Orr 2013, 433). An eminent eco-philosopher, Holmes Rolston III, encourages a move beyond education as schooling: “Biological identity ... mingles with biological solidarity and is shared with the fauna and flora of the eco-systemic whole.” (*The Biophilia Hypothesis* 2013, 407) This probably makes for a more viable cross-species solidarity, if the alternative is Charles Foster’s *Being a Beast: Adventures Across the Species Divide* (Metropolitan Books, 2017). Therein, Foster records his various attempts at actually living other animals’ niches—sleeping in the outdoors (sans tent), eating worms, going about naked, foraging, etc. While this strategy sounds exciting and challenging, it would be well for us to remember that what bio-

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philes are after is communion through difference and not fusion through sameness.

Relatedly, we should examine the preconditions for, as well as the consequences of, biophilia's growth. William Manson announces, "Joyful alive-ness is renewed when one feels exuberantly free from societal constraints and yet intimately connected with the world of living nature." (2003, 360) This outlook is like Wilson's or Kellert's views, only on steroids or Ecstasy. A contrary approach is outlined by a Fromm enthusiast: "For biophilia to emerge or be sustained, certain societal conditions need to be in place. Chief among them are the absence of injustice and the presence of freedom to create and innovate." (*Mathehu Weblog*, 2010) Likewise, we can hear from another commentator the influence of Frankfurt-School reasoning: "*For Fromm biophilia is the essence of humanitarian ethics. . . . He believes that a productive, creative, caring attitude toward life is crucial . . . to fighting any form of alienation*" (Eckhardt 1992, 233-40, *italics added*). On this viewpoint reverence for life takes precedence over some/many ecologists' penchant for hunting (e.g. Aldo Leopold)—take a look, for instance, at a recent album published by NYT: there are several photographs testifying to human-squirrel cohabitation (the squirrels' nest hangs on a fire-escape outside the humans' apartment) and a few paragraphs about it (Sterchi and Howard 2017, 7).

So, again now—how can/does solidarity arise and grow between different species? We have seen hints of it along the course of the article. Let's focus on it here, and see if we can't come to understand and appreciate some views on the precise issue at hand. The first author to consider, David Abram, wrote the wonderful *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology*. His position in the book is to reawaken our senses and mentality to

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their organismic roots in the natural environment. This is the core of “owning up to being an animal, a creature of the earth”. Such a project calls on us to “grow a worthy cosmology by attending closely to our encounters with other creatures”. If we bring ourselves “in service to the more-than-human matrix of corporeal encounter”, we will reap essential “contact and interchange with other shapes of life” (2010, 3 and 7). Abram goes all the way with his animism, which is to say he sees not only animals (definitely) but also plants (maybe), rocks (unlikely) as animate, conscious fellows (the parentheticals are mine). The world for Abram is oceanic, with no part of it completely inanimate: “There’s an affinity between my body and the sensible presences that surround me, *an old solidarity* that pays scant heed to our overeducated distinction between animate and inanimate matter.” (2010, 29, *italics added*)

At this point, many/most readers will balk and want to get off the biosophic tour he offers. Yet Abram is aware of potential criticisms, and he supplies responses to them:

Our animal senses, co-evolved with the animate landscape, are still tuned to the many-voiced earth. Our creaturely body, shaped in ongoing interaction with the other bodies that compose the biosphere, remains poised and thirsting for contact with otherness. (2010, 264)

How is our thirst slaked? By experiences with wild yet related others.

The simple act of perception is experienced as an interchange between oneself and that which one perceives—as a meeting, a participation, a communion of beings. For each thing that we sense is assumed to be

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sensitive in its own right, able to feel and respond to the beings around it, and to us. (2010, 268)

Another connection Abram affirms, yet only briefly hints at, is the world of hunting and omnivory therefrom. Paul Shepard is a towering influence on Abram, and the reader suspects that the former encouraged the latter to accept a degree of atavism into his cosmology. Not for Shepard (nor Abram) welfarism, vegetarianism, domestication (= slavery). (Shepard 2013, 279 and 282) “The Pleistocene offers us no compassion for animals in the warm idiom of the teddy bear,” declares Shepard. Well-meaning animal lovers are sentimentally infected with the Noah Syndrome (we are rescuers) and the Peaceable Kingdom Myth (we are gentle at the interface between species). (Shepard 2013, 275ff. and 288) To these complaints, I would respond that atavism is not always the best exemplar for contemporary behavior, that the Anthropocene provides occasions for empathy with other animals’ predicaments (not necessarily pity, which I agree has a connotation of hierarchy to be resisted).

So what are we to do? Shepard says we should love animals as sacred beings and respect them collectively as other peoples (Shepard 2013, 289). The other-nations frame comes from Henry Beston, in his *The Outermost House*, and has recently been supported by Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka in their *Zoöpolis*. It overplays the struggle to survive as competition, and underestimates the great amount of symbiosis and collaboration extant in trans-species encounters. Now love-talk presents a conundrum, in terms of ingestion ethics—is it permissible that we eat those whom we love? Many pro-hunting advocates have previously answered “yes”, on the basis that hunters get to know their prey and its territory better. A recent entry into this debate, Dominique Lestel’s *Eat This Book*:

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A Carnivore's Manifesto (see especially the first and second “courses” [= chapters], “Some [Good] Reasons *Not* to Become an Ethical Vegetarian” [21-56], “The Ethics of the Carnivore” [57-80] (trans. by G. Steiner, 2016), contributes another positive factor—namely, that organic omnivores get to truly participate in the chemical and emotional experience that is heterotrophy. My feeling and thinking about such apologetics has evolved into the negative, which is to say that I tend to side more with the veg(etari)ans. I think that photo-hunters can pick up much the same knowledge as subsistence or cultural hunters do (excepting, of course, the skills of butchery). Further, I feel that heterotrophy can be experienced in the botanical register and does not necessarily depend on zootic practice. (Here I should give some notice of plants: killing and eating them can be considered a form of *self-defense* in that giving up ingestion of plants would reduce veg(etari)ans’ heterotrophy to [at least near] zero and so results in death [of the would-be predator]. If this point is insufficient for the reader, consider that many if not most animals are generally given to *self-consciousness* [or at least higher sapience] while plants are not, a condition which conventionally raises the former’s moral status above the latter’s.) At this point we can take into account cannibalism, for I rather doubt that most (or even many) pro-hunters are prepared to pursue their ecological and biological desiderata into the human race. If that last claim is true, hunting would be exposed as a speciesist practice. Thus I conclude that loving does not imply eating everything.

There is one last issue for us to discuss (as listed in my introductory words above): how does/n’t the concept of species-being apply to humanity? Species-being is a Marxian notion meant to designate both the essence of the type “human” and the self-awareness of this essence by human beings. In other

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words, species-being is Marx's way of thinking through human nature as a conscious animal. Being anthropocentric himself, Marx insists that only humans are free and self-conscious entities—and so only humans have proper access to (their own) species-being (Wartenberg 1982, 77-95; some contest Marx's anthropocentrism, e.g. Bellamy Foster and Burkett 2017). Before ending our discussion, I want to take issue with two parts of this conceptual (mis)construction. First, there may be a significant number of *non*-humans who have species-being (elephants, cetaceans, other great apes, etc.). If that is true, then we already have access to alien, peer intelligences beyond the human (and so the astrobiological fetish is somewhat premature). Second, if species-being is allowed to define social identity, scholars and students of animality will miss curious features of different creatures. For instance, the social construction of grouping--what counts as a "we" when we say or write "we"--can be unnecessarily narrow, as when we notice species characteristics but remain relatively unconcerned with other taxonomic constitutions (say, genus, family, order, phylum, kingdom, etc.). A couple years ago, a theorist contributing to the NYT selected and defended mammal as the most appropriate and promising dimension of bio-affiliation: "my feeling of solidarity for mammals strengthens my feelings of pity and pride regarding that particular branch of the mammal family known as homo." To think of ourselves as primarily *homo sapiens* is to continue the long and nasty tradition of human exceptionalism. "We are in need of new perceptions of self, ones that acknowledge our close relationship to the rest of life on Earth. Thinking of ourselves not as human, but as mammals, provides an accessible path to a greater awareness of what we have in common with other species" (Laist 2015). (An example would be comparing human species-being to human class-being [i.e. mammal].) The mammal affiliation is not

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too narrow (human, race, sex, creed, economic class, etc. often lead to vicious chauvinisms); neither is it too broad (organism or earthling may make for an identification that's too thin, not substantive enough). Finally, then, biophilic solidarity might benefit us (as humans) and undermine anthropocentrism if it is moderate in affiliating with a class of animals (i.e. mammals).

The issue of identification just discussed gives us a picture of the cross-species ontology human animals might invoke as they try to re-build their sense of self and relevant biological alliances. Multi-species identity metaphysics (MIM) you may call it, and it sets the stage of solidarity for inter-species philosophy and advocacy. In other words, we've got a fix on a mindset that may prove powerful enough to dislodge present animal alienation and become especially fruitful for future human-animal interaction and relationship. MIM can serve as a platform for a new kind of zoopolitics, something a lot like Donaldson's and Kymlicka's rendition. If we ask the question, *what should inter-species society look like?*, certain demographic images/metaphors suggest themselves, the most obvious being the notorious *melting pot* of assimilation—here we might say that pet-keeping illustrates the metaphor. The melting pot is currently in disfavor, because it seems to demand too much—i.e., the sacrifice of original culture or niche. We could then move forward with a different image, namely that of the *salad*, the figurative tossing of which provides a place for the mixture of cultures/niches. But there are drawbacks to this vision: *on or by whose interests will the salad be tossed?*, if participants can keep their previous culture or niche, what would be the comingling element—just a dressing seems too superficial. We are brought by these reflections to a third option, one I prefer: the stew, in which all ingredients retain the basics of their previous forms (sufficient for identification), but also one in which

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all ingredients contribute their distinctive flavors to the common stock or broth that permeates other ingredients such that they take on some of the tastes associated with those others.

I would like now at least to mention other possibilities to the first two positions sketched above and arrive at instantiation of the option I prefer. I suggested pet-keeping might be an exemplar of assimilative relations (especially when the pet is expected to play the role of a junior family member). An alternative can be seen in Donna Haraway's *The Companion Species Manifesto*, where she grants difference/otherness its due rather than relying solely on similitude. Secondly, the tossed salad metaphor can be illustrated by the institution of zoos, where the ingredients/inhabitants still have some differences but they are collectivized through captivity; alternatives are described in Ralph Acampora's *Metamorphoses of the Zoo*. The third and last option was that of the stew, which may be visited in the imagination by examining Henry Beston's *The Outermost House* and Jennifer Wolch's "Zoopolis" in *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*. These authors allow wild animals their species-specific *umwelt* (eco-worlds). Moves in this direction can help clear some space for the revitalization of biophilia, thus overcoming various aspects of animal alienation. It may seem strange to argue for solidarity between the species when I among others also argue for leaving them alone—the key is that these two approaches have to be brought into an equilibrium that avoids too much intimacy and yet does not result in species apartheid.

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