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Title: Introduction (to Creaturely theology)

Date: 2009

Originally published in: Creaturely theology: On God, humans and other animals

Example citation: Deane-Drummond, C., & Clough, D. (2009). Introduction. In C. Deane-Drummond & D. Clough (Eds.), *Creaturely theology: On God, humans and other animals* (pp. 1-18). London: SCM Press, 2009.

Version of item: Author’s post-print

Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10034/72973>

Deane-Drummond, Celia, and David Clough. 'Introduction' in *Creaturely Theology*. Edited by Deane-Drummond, Celia, and David Clough. London: SCM Press, 2009, 1-18.

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Introduction

Celia Deane-Drummond and David Clough

Since we have good reason to believe that only a very few of God's creatures — human beings, and perhaps angels — engage in theology, the term 'creaturely theology' may seem problematically broad, perhaps giving the impression that the authors gathered here indulge in the hope of finding some chimpanzee equivalent to St Augustine. Since we have good reason to believe that God does not engage in theology, theology must be an activity particular to God's creatures, making the term 'creaturely theology' tautologous or redundant. What led us to adopt 'Creaturely Theology' as the title for this collection, at the end of our discussions together and by consensus, despite these disadvantages, was a collective sense that the term had the virtue of gesturing towards a starting point for theology notable only in its comparative rarity. By 'creaturely theology' we mean to indicate something simple: engaging in the theological task conscious of one's creatureliness. The importance of this consciousness became clear to us in considering appropriate ways to think and speak of those of God's non-human creatures with which we have most in common. In the first place, doing theology conscious of one's creatureliness forces on the theologian a certain humility: to be a creature is to be finite, possessed for a short time of a knowledge that is incomplete, and fallible even in the use of this inadequate resource. Such awareness will usefully guard against making poorly-grounded and over-confident assertions of God's preferential purposes for the species to which one belongs or its relative merit in relation to the rest of God's creation. In the second place, doing theology remembering that one is a creature makes clear that when the object of one's theologizing are other creatures of God, we recognize those other creatures as, at the most fundamental level, like us: one creature reflecting on another. Such a recollection makes clear that the first word in this theological task must be of

our connection to, relationship with and solidarity alongside others of God's creatures, rather than of differentiation

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from them, which has been the more common starting point (and frequently the ending point too). In the third place, doing theology in awareness of being one of God's creatures encourages attentiveness to the many attempts that have been made to build a high boundary wall between *Homo sapiens* and every other species of creature within creation. Such attending leads quickly to critical questions concerning the multiple and contradictory foundations of this barrier, and the motives of the architects for attempting the construction of such an unpromising structure.

Early in the attempt to do theology in this creaturely mode, 'animal's have a tendency to creep in. 'Animal' has an informative etymology showing it to refer at root to a creature with the breath of life. It is a comparative newcomer, not used in the King James translation of the Bible, and hardly in use at all until the end of the sixteenth century. The difficulty with 'animal' is that from its earliest usage, and despite its etymological roots, it has been ambiguous concerning whether it includes human beings: it is used both to refer to all living creatures, and as a collective term for all living creatures apart from human beings. While this radical ambiguity in modern terminology might well be considered an apt representation of a radical modern ambivalence about the relationship between human beings and other creatures, it presents something of a problem when, as frequently in this volume, the subject matter is precisely the nature of the relationship between human beings and other living creatures. In modern English usage, while biologists attempt to resolve the ambiguity inclusively, the binary opposition has largely prevailed: one goes to the zoo to see the animals, and one expects to find them looking through the bars from within rather than without. To accept this usage, however, and use the term 'animal' consistently to exclude human beings seems to concede from the outset that the most significant relationship between *Homo sapiens* and all other animate living creatures is one of binary opposition. To hold out, on the other hand, for a consistently inclusive usage of 'animal', is both historically unjustified and, in all probability, doomed to failure. For these reasons we have opened this volume to all kinds of 'animal's, though hope, at least at points, to help the reader attend to which is which.

Creaturely theology in the sense we are attempting is clearly no novelty: such concerns bring to mind an image of St Francis of Assisi preaching to the birds, or, in a British context, St Columba's white horse shedding tears at the passing of this great saint and lover of animals. The inclusion of

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such stories in the lives of these early saints point to something fundamental about earlier conceptions of other animate creatures, namely, that they were not radically separate from the human community, but creatures like us, creatures not only in dependence on earth other, but also dependent on God. If we compare this view with modern practices in contemporary society, replete with industrial farming taking shape in, for example, layer upon layer of battery hens crammed into confined spaces, we may be excused for wondering if perhaps our own perception has gone awry, rather than dismissing such early hagiography as romantic effervescence.

Given the rupture with these earlier memories and its consequences, it is hardly surprising that the first modern efforts in naming a philosophy and theology of animals were ones that sought to persuade others that animals do matter and need to be taken seriously. At this stage the most prominent concern was *ethical*, namely, trying to change particular practices that were cruel towards animals, either through industrialised farming, some forms of medical experimentation or careless pet ownership. Peter Singer is perhaps best known in this camp, seeking to persuade his readers of the validity of taking a broader view that takes into account the sum total of suffering, and includes all creatures with interests.¹ As a utilitarian, he combines consequentialism with a sum ranking that totals all utilities, along with a substantive theory of the good, which in, his case, is the satisfaction of preferences. Although he has sometimes been dubbed an animal rights campaigner, this is actually a misnomer, since his perspective still allows for some cruel treatment of animals, as long as it is outweighed by other benefits, viewed in terms of preference satisfaction. Perhaps the most radical aspect of his philosophy was his charge of 'speciesism' towards those

¹ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation Animal Liberation: A New Ethic for our Treatment of Animals* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1990 [1975]). For a more detailed discussion of Singer, Regan and Linzey, see C. Deane-Drummond, *The Ethics of Nature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 54-85. Drawing on Thomist thought, Deane-Drummond argues for a virtue approach to animal ethics, over against the utilitarian approach of Singer or the rights approach of Regan and Linzey.

who gave greater attention to human communities. Instead, satisfaction of preferences was all that counts, so that a human being may be deemed to have a lower level of preference satisfaction in some situations than, for example, other non-human animals. More explicit attention to animal rights became established through the work of Tom Regan, who argued for the value of individual animals as ‘subjects of a life’.² He restricts his attention to mammalian life in particular as that which is

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worthy of most attention. Regan extends the consideration of rights understood in terms of basic dignity of individual (mammalian) creatures, and in this sense parts company from the sum calculus of Singer. In this sense his clarion call for the total abolition of all commercial agriculture, not just intensive rearing; alongside a ban of hunting, a ban in medical use of animals and all meat eating goes further than Singer in its practical implications.³

Andrew Linzey is perhaps the best known author writing from a Christian perspective on the topic of non-human animals, arguing with Singer, for the liberation of animals and with Regan, for the recognition of rights for animals.⁴ He attempts to illuminate links between Christianity and the philosophy of Regan by attaching to it a particular theological rationale that he finds upon re-examination of the tradition.⁵ His main concern is to persuade other Christian believers of the imperative in caring about what happens to animals, and that other considerations, including broader tendencies towards earth keeping, need to be resisted if they have a negative impact on animal suffering.⁶ He finds theological justification of his view by turning to the incarnation, God incarnate in *flesh*, so that all animals are subjects of inherent value to God.

² Tom Regan and Peter Singer (eds) *Animal Rights and Human Obligations* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1976), Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* [1984] (London: Routledge, 1988).

³ See, for example, Tom Regan, *The Thee Generation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991).

⁴ See, for example, A. Linzey, *Animal Rights: A Christian Assessment* (London: SCM Press, 1976), *Christianity and the Rights of Animals* (London: SPCK, 1987), *Animal Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1994), *Animal Gospel: Christian Faith as if Animals Mattered* (London: Hodder and Stoughton and Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999). In the 1987 work, Linzey prefers language of ‘theos-rights’: other animals have claims on us on the basis of their inherent value as God’s creatures.

⁵ The jointly authored texts speak of the close relationship between Regan and Linzey. See, for example, A. Linzey and T. Regan (eds.), *Animals and Christianity: A Book of Readings* (London: SPCK, 1989).

⁶ The ethical priority is clear in, for example, his rather more recent *Animal Theology*, that devotes the bulk of attention to ethical issues, rather than theological discussion. On the latter point, see A. Linzey, ‘The Conflict between Ecotheology and Animal Theology’ in *Creatures of the Same God: Explorations in Animal Theology* (Winchester: Winchester University Press, 2007), 49–71.

Adapting Bonhoeffer's notion of theos-rights in order to include animals, he argues that animal rights flow directly from the rights given by God, that is, God establishes the specific value of some living beings. In this sense, humans do not bestow rights on animals, rather, they recognise the right as already given by God. Filling out this view, he adds the idea of generosity, that he interprets as giving moral priority to the weak, in this case, the weakest are animals, so are analogous to children in terms of human responsibility. Indeed, he does not simply equate the two, but seeks to give even *higher* priority

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to animals, so that, 'animals, like children, should be seen as having not equal claim, but even greater claim upon us precisely because of their vulnerability and relative powerlessness'.⁷ Linzey is strident in his rejection of animal experimentation, meat eating, hunting and all practices that infringe such rights. He also seeks to find ancient spiritual resources that support his views, and in pastorally-oriented texts speaks of recovering liturgies of animal care that welcome animals into the human community.⁸ Perhaps the most interesting volume in this vein is the jointly authored text *After Noah: Animals and the Liberation of Theology*, with Dan Cohn-Sherbok, in which they argue for the celebration of animals in place of their exploitation, where animals become agents of justice in Jewish rabbinic literature, and Jesus' identification with animals in the apocryphal literature raises questions about human creaturely relationships.⁹

The work of the Christian philosopher Stephen R. L. Clark on non-human animals has received less notice than that of Linzey, especially from theologians, but is impressive in its scope, depth and engagement over time. His books on the topic include *The Moral Status of Animals* (1977), *The Nature of the Beast* (1982), *Animals and Their Moral Standing* (1997), *The Political Animal* (1999) and most recently *Biology and Christian Ethics* (2000).¹⁰ He distances himself from both utilitarianism

⁷ A. Linzey, 'Animal Rights', in Paul Barry Clarke and Andrew Linzey (eds.), *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 29-33.

⁸ A. Linzey, *Animal Rites: Liturgies of Animal Care* (London: SPCK, 1999).

⁹ A. Linzey and D. Cohn-Sherbok, *After Noah: Animals and the Liberation of Theology* (London: Mowbray, 1997).

¹⁰ S. R. L. Clark, *The Moral Status of Animals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), *The Nature of the Beast* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), *Animals and their Moral Standing* (London:

and rights-based models and draws eclectically and often lyrically on classical traditions to argue for a revolution in our regard for non-human animals and the corresponding implications of this for our thinking about the human. Of particular relevance to this volume is his contention that human ‘superiority’ to other animals, insofar as it is real at all, consists only in ‘the possibility that we may (and the corresponding duty that we should) allow our fellow creatures their part of the action’.¹¹ While the main thrust of his arguments are philosophical, rather than theological, his interrogation of theological issues brings new insights that serve to challenge presuppositions about theology and ethics. This is particularly evident in *How to Think About the Earth* (1993), which, while it dealt with

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environmental issues more broadly, was also set in the context of his earlier discussion of animal issues.¹²

Martha Nussbaum is representative of what the philosopher David De Grazia has dubbed the new generation of thinkers on animals.¹³ She argues for the flourishing of animal species according to their capabilities, drawing on the economic philosophy of Amartya Sen.¹⁴ Nussbaum recognises clearly that trying to judge what might be the norm for a given species is an evaluative matter, that is, it cannot simply be read off the way nature is. Indeed, drawing on Aristotle, she argues that the capacity for humans to wonder at a given life form ‘at least suggests the idea that it is good for that being to flourish as the kind of thing it is’.¹⁵ De Grazia argues that while the first generation of thinkers on animals, such as Singer and Regan, argued simply *that* animals matter, the new generation argue for much deeper consideration of *how* they matter. He includes in this new wave Mary Midgley, who, in *Animals and Why They*

Routledge, 1997), *The Political Animal* (London: Routledge, 1999), *Biology and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹¹ Clark, *Moral Status of Animals*, 168.

¹² S. R. L. Clark, *How to Think About the Earth* (London: Mowbrays, 1993).

¹³ D. De Grazia, *Taking Animals Seriously* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). See Aaron Gross in this volume for further comment.

¹⁴ M Nussbaum, ‘Beyond Compassion and Humanity: Justice for Non-Human Animals’, in Cass R. Sunstein and Martha Nussbaum (eds.), *Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 299-320. For longer discussion see M. Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 325-407.

¹⁵ M. Nussbaum, ‘Beyond Compassion’, p. 306.

Matter, was writing on such issues considerably before many others had begun to grasp their significance.¹⁶ Midgley raises, in particular, the issue of the importance of symbolism in human deliberation of animals, the socialibility of animals in their ability to bond with humans, and boundary considerations of environmental ethics. Stephen Webb has also turned his attention to pets in particular as a basis for developing a theology of compassion for animals, eschewing animal rights discourse, and viewing pets as gifts, rather than objects of our consumption.¹⁷ Yet apart from the edited collection *Animals on the Agenda*, in which a range of scholars wrote short essays on topics ranging from scriptural interpretation, through to theological questions about whether animals have souls or are redeemed, there is relatively little discussion among theologians about *why* and *how* animals matter.¹⁸ Further, in the latter volume it soon becomes clear that particular readings of tradition are such in order to set

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up certain theologians as instigators and culprits of a negative attitude towards animals. Such a view reinforces the belief of philosophers such as John Gray, that Christianity's cardinal error is in its assumption that humans are different from animals.¹⁹ Aquinas is top of this list. Yet, for all the more obvious ethical views towards animals, that Aquinas shared with his cultural contemporaries, there is implicit in his views a far more sympathetic and sensitive treatment of non-human creatures.²⁰

It is appropriate, then, that this volume begins with a historical section and a challenge to such stereotypes by John Berkman's critical, but far more sensitive reading of Aquinas. He explores not just Aquinas' understanding of the purpose or end of humans and animals, but significantly raises the issue of ensoulment understood in terms of animal capabilities and the kinds of appetites found in humans

¹⁶ Mary Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter* (London: Routledge, 1983).

¹⁷ Stephen Webb, *A Christian Theology of Compassion for Animals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹⁸ A. Linzey, ed., *Animals on the Agenda* (London: SPCK, 1998).

¹⁹ J. Gray, *Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals* (London: Granta Books, 2002), p. 4.

²⁰ Judith Barad discusses this issue in her J. Barad, *Aquinas on the Nature and Treatment of Animals* (San Francisco: Scholars Press, 1995). For discussion of this and primary texts see C. Deane-Drummond, *The Ethics of Nature* (Oxford: Blackwells, 2004), pp.

and non-humans. Furthermore, he grasps the nettle so often ranged against Aquinas' association of rationality as uniquely endowed on human animals. His essay is representative of the book as a whole in as much as it seeks to penetrate more deeply than ever the roots of the tradition, and in this sense is *radical* in its orientation.

Continuing this detailed engagement with the Christian tradition, David Clough engages Martin Luther on the relationship between humans and other animals, noting that that Luther found the close association between human beings and animals problematic long before Darwin had brought this to the attention of his associates in his *Origin of Species*. Clough argues that the tension between Luther's emphasis on human salvation and his recognition of the immanence of God in creation must be seen in the context of his sympathy for birds and other creatures, seen most clearly in his attempted sabotage of a hunt by hiding a rabbit from the hounds. He suggests that this tension cannot be resolved within Luther's corpus, but that one route might be to use the anagogical method Luther employs to resolve an analogous tension concerning the animality of Christ.

Esther Reed's treatment of Orthodox icons pushes us to consider other ways of considering animals in the tradition that have also been largely neglected, at least in Western theological reflection. Her essay opens up a world that is suggestive of a much deeper theological and spiritual tradition in inclusion of animals, while recognising

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at the same time the anthropocentrism that hovers in the background. Yet she also considers that the overall direction of these icons work towards animals becoming not simply like humans, but truer to themselves as animals, rather than like humans as knowing subjects. In this sense, the uncertainty that surrounds any supposed separation of animals from humans is the place where we learn to accommodate both kinds.

While the historical approach is suggestive of a rather different systematic approach to animals than has hitherto been recognised, the possibility of further development of traditions in contemporary theology is taken further in the second section of this book, dedicated to more systematic approaches. As in the last section, there is no attempt to be fully comprehensive in this respect, but, rather, offer

representative essays that show something of what is possible through a re-reading of tradition towards a theology of the animal.

Denis Edwards's essay in particular retrieves Athanasius' classic theology of redemption through incarnation, such that redemption is widened out to include non-human animals. While Athanasius talks more generally of creation, rather than animals as such, Edwards argues for lines of extension towards a contemporary theology of redemption of animals. His essay is also of significance in that it points to a possible theological approach to the interminable debate between environmental and animal ethics. His theology is a theology of inclusion, not just a fragile joining of animals with human communities, but one that sets the boundary of community wider than this as well, including animals, humans and other creatures. This immediately raises the issue of how far and to what extent humans might be considered different from other creatures, named in the tradition as bearing the image of God.

David Cunningham develops the theme of the image of God in his essay in order to argue for an extension of the idea of image bearing to creatures beyond the human community. He interrogates the supposed distinctions between human beings and other animals that theologians have used to add content to the *imago Dei* and shows that the grammar of the concept of image makes clear that considerations of degree rather than absolute difference are inescapable. In the final section of his essay he examines a range of implications of using 'flesh' rather than 'image of God' to think about theological anthropology, noting its abundant usage in the Bible, its function in establishing relationship with God and commonality between creatures, its incarnational import, and eschatological resonance.

Such considerations raise important questions about how we are interpreting the place of animals in the tradition, that is,

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hermeneutics. The third section begins with a robust essay by the Jewish scholar, Aaron Gross, who argues for a reconsideration of precisely *how* we think religiously about animals, in conversation with the Jewish thinker Emmanuel Levinas. Gross lays out three interpretive orientations or, as he describes them, 'rigours': a pragmatic rigour that attends to day to day experience, science, and political issues; an ontological rigour that attends to symbolic meanings of animals and the role they play

in defining human being; and a structural rigor that attends to the many layered meanings of animals and the intersections between these meanings. For him, animal questions are not merely *additional* to other reflections, but require a critical rethinking of core religious beliefs, including our understanding of, for example, the meanings of divinity and humanity.²¹ He also challenges some interpreters of Levinas in that he finds in Levinas's attitude towards animals rather more ambiguity than previous readings have suggested. Further, Gross suggests that Levinas' ambiguous engagement with the idea that humankind "is responsible for the universe, the hostage of the creature..." has profound implications for how we might perceive animals more generally.

Rachel Muers takes us deeper into problematic questions associated with the representation of animals in scriptural texts. Beginning with the provocative critique of Carol Adams, that animals are not simply marginalised, but rather never come into view, and are then subsequently marginalised, Muers asks the reader to consider other aspects of the sacred text that regularly resists our attention, namely the appearance of animals in the margins. In particular, such marginalia invite readers to pause in a way that goes further than simply reflecting instrumental use in the manner Adams suggests. Indeed, she finds very little evidence in biblical texts of the symbolic portrayal of animals as beastly in the negative sense that Midgley finds in the classic tradition more generally. Instead, drawing on the book of Job, non-human animals are represented as creatures, qualified by their common dependence on God as creator. While it is possible to see in traditional texts, such as Augustine, evidence for a self-conscious reading of, for example, lambs and pigs, beyond their

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literal meaning, that has significance in the history of relations with Judaism, this does not necessarily amount to a form of instrumentalization of animals in general, for animals are drawn in, as much as written on.

²¹ There are certain parallels here with ecotheology, in as much as many ecotheologians also believe that environmental questions are not merely ethical, but demand a critical reinterpretation of core traditions and beliefs. Both are also grounded in particular practical issues to hand, and both are contextual in as much as they start from concerns facing particular communities. The systematic work in this respect, as for animals, has barely begun. For overview, see C. Deane-Drummond, *Ecotheology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008).

Stephen Clark's entertaining and thought provoking essay pushes us further back into the meaning of symbol making that emerged in the context of consideration of our earliest origins as hominid ancestors, that is, an exploration of the meaning of the boundary between the human and non-human in evolutionary terms. He challenges the largely unexamined views of evolutionary archaeologists in their assumption that our own species, *Homo sapiens* must have, in the course of pre-history, violently outwitted its hominid neighbours. He also believes that stories about creatures like us tell us as much about ourselves as our earliest ancestors. Our fantasies about Neanderthals, Indonesian 'hobbits' and the like tell us about our own particular fears and preoccupations. Further, just because they were different from humans today, does not necessarily mean that coexistence was impossible. Clark suggests that the way we are inclined to interpret such history points to alternative futures for human beings where deliberate manipulation of human species takes shape. Yet such a consideration asks us to question how far our own sense of what counts as a norm for human kind is justified, as it is used as a way of marking out differences between humans, and also, between humans and animal kinds. Further, this points to a religious sense, in as much as the intimated norms of beauty reflected even in imagined futures of creatures other than ourselves; points to the variegated expression of the incarnated Word, and, as such, is resonate with the idea of animals as our kin.

From the discussion so far, it becomes clear that the consideration and interpretation of animals is rather more fluid than some have cared to admit. But alongside this discussion there are debates about the moral status of animals that once more come to the surface. This issue is dealt with in the fourth section of the book. But how are such debates to be cashed out in the political sphere? In a novel essay Peter Scott proposes the concept of the anti-human as a way of casting in a new light any differences in capacity between the human and the non-human animal. Instead of giving theological weight to differences in capacity, he argues on the contrary that differences should be understood by reference to participation. Hence, it is possible to envisage a theological way of knowing that does not simply rest on the differences between human and animal. Scott invites us to go behind what he sees as the thoughtlessness in human treatment of animals and how they are portrayed politically. In political terms nature, including animals, is treated as property; it is commodified

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and subject to the processes of production. Yet animals, some human and some non-human, share interests in as much as they resist exploitation. For Scott, rights are not simply aligned with citizenship, but, as natural rights, emerge as part of a common sociality and so not solely with reference to humans. Further an anti-human stance means not always asserting human political interests, so that political scope inheres in the commonality of beings. At this point, a doctrine of ascension is theologically determinative: Jesus' human reality, as Scott puts it, functions both as an identity of God and as the ground of the participation by creatures in God. Jesus' ascended human reality provides thereby the theological rationale of the anti-human. This anti-human offers a theological place of intervention at which an alienated and artificial 'third' nature comes into view, beyond the first nature of nature as such and the second nature of convention, and so can be challenged towards the renewal of commonality.

But how might such political companionship between animals and humans be envisaged? Deane-Drummond takes up a area that has been the subject of debate for some time in philosophical circles, namely, the question of the morality of animals. This asks not simply, how should humans treat animals, but are animals in any sense sharing in the moral community that humans have constructed, and, more importantly, can they be considered moral within their own social worlds? In particular, she asks how far considerations of particular vices and virtues might be applicable to non-human animals, drawing particularly on the work of Frans de Waal and Marc Bekoff. Her discussion relates these studies to theological accounts of virtues such as justice, compassion and prudence. Deane-Drummond argues that Christopher Bohm's account of the evolution of conscience is valid, but doubts its comparability with theological meanings of conscience, and critiques the tendency to read into hunter-gatherer societies meanings about our human origins. Such discourse raises consideration about how far animals might be considered as sharing in the image bearing that has traditionally been assigned to human beings alone.

Neil Messer takes up the moral status of animals in a more traditional way in that he is concerned with the practical implications of animal ethics. Focusing on the two particular examples of meat-eating and biomedical research on animals, he argues that an answer to such practical questions requires an account of the proper ends or

purposes of human and animal life. He challenges too close a reliance on an evolutionary account of animal ends, since this would miss out the important theological tradition that locates human and animal purpose within the narrative of God's creative, redeeming and reconciling work in Christ. He draws

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particularly on the divine command ethics of Karl Barth, which he believes can engage in conversation with the natural sciences and critically appropriate insights from them. Drawing on this approach, and on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's account of ultimate and penultimate things, he suggests particular diagnostic questions as a way of interrogating whether an action is ethically justifiable. In particular, he suggests that there may be incorrect reasons for refusing to eat meat or rejecting medical research on animals, related, for example, to an anti-materialism or pseudo-asceticism. He expresses reservations about Linzey's call to 'approximate' the life of God's promised peaceable kingdom (Isaiah 11:6-9) in the present age and his critique of animal experimentation, on the grounds that human attempts to establish aspects of the peaceable kingdom run the risk of a dangerous utopianism. Rather, we need to admit to the entanglement in sin that is the lot of all human beings. In such a situation the limited use of animals is permitted, with the caveat that this is not an expression of the ultimate future hope. Messer provisionally concludes that, in contemporary Western contexts, this argues for vegetarianism, but not for the rejection of all animal experimentation.

The final section deals with wider ecological issues in their relationship with animals, and asks us to consider more carefully the environmental issues at stake. Michael Northcott's essay begins by squarely facing up to the central problems that come to the surface in the animal liberation and animal rights literature represented by Peter Singer and Tom Regan. In particular, he addresses the political violence against other humans associated with these movements. He then asks us to look more carefully at the roots of violence, taking cues from the Genesis text, including the story of rescue as represented in the Noah's ark account. Further, he probes the sacred nature of blood in the Jewish tradition and compares the relative constraint expressed here with the modern industrialised practices. He identifies many of the problems that we now face with Kantian attempts to separate humans from other animals by

elevating the reasoning powers of humans, and, in particular, sheering moral consideration from the instrumental techniques of scientists. Northcott believes that in as much as Kant failed to take into account the social nature of animals this finds echoes in contemporary philosophical approaches such as that of Singer. He is also drawn to the ethological account of animals, including not just primates, but other species as well. His final section addresses practical issues of vegetarian choice, in as much as it represents the ethical ideal of non-violence and the peaceable kingdom spoken of in Isaiah. Yet, rather than naming total abstinence, he argues

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for a pattern that takes its cues from the ascetic saints of old, limiting greed not just by a reduction in animal keeping, but a new way of living with animals that allows for limited consumption.

Finally, Christopher Southgate's essay considers practical aspects of human interventions in non-human species extinction exacerbated through the impact of climate change. The theological basis for conservation of species is the goodness of creation, and Southgate's ethical approach is informed both by a belief in the necessity of human stewardship of creation and by a sense of humanity's calling to be co-creator and co-redeemer. He challenges the common ecological perspective that human action should be directed as preserving the 'wild', noting that we are beyond the point where any significant part of the earth is unaffected by human activities. Southgate draws on a discussion of Pauline texts to argue that Christian engagement with the preservation of species should be other-regarding, attentive to the needs of the weak and voiceless and attentive to the community of God's creation. He argues that this may point to costly interventions to preserve non-human species, giving the assisted migration of polar bears to Antarctica as an example.

While the essays gathered together in this volume are diverse, and we discovered through conversations that we represent different positions in terms of both our focus and ethical standpoints, a number of common threads are in evidence that cross between different essays in fruitful way. Such common threads highlight what Gross has termed the *structural rigor* present in animal discourse, namely, that there are many layers of meaning that come to the surface during the discourse. Some layers are more prominent in some essays rather than others. For example, some

attention to philosophical issues are addressed in virtually all essays, and authors such as Alasdair McIntyre are discussed in Berkman, Deane-

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Drummond and Northcott's contribution. The significance of Mary Midgley's work to this field is also obvious throughout the essays. The interweaving of political and philosophical issues is clearest in Scott, but it also surfaces in Northcott. Attention to the importance of scriptural text is clearest in Muers, but it is also important in Clough, Cunningham, Reed and Southgate. Again, the interweaving with feminist concerns about animals comes to view in both Muers and Reed's essays in particular. Attention to the virtues and the Thomist tradition are most fully elaborated in Berkman, but are also important in Deane-Drummond and to a lesser extent in Northcott. Attention to *pragmatic rigor* is also significant in many essays, including attention to both the ethological studies represented by Frans de Waal and others in Berkman, Deane-Drummond and Northcott, alongside consideration of evolutionary issues in Clark, Messer, Deane-Drummond. Indeed, it is the belief of the editors that dialogue with science needs to be woven into the discussion in as much as it is taken into account, rather than simply setting, the agenda for theological discourse. In this sense, this book is offering a new way of engaging in discussion with science, for it is appreciating its claims, while at the same time appropriating other discourses as well. In addition, we can also find here due attention to what Gross terms *ontological rigor*, that is, attention to symbolic meanings of animals and the utilization of these symbolically invested animals to draw the borders of human being(s). The work of Reed and Muers gives special attention to animals as symbols while the essays by Clark, Cunningham, and Scott attend especially to the work discourses about animals do to define the human. The book does not cover *historical trends* in human relationships with animals, but this is admirably dealt with in other volumes.²² Nor does it delve into details of ethical questions; rather, ethical issues form the context in which theological reflection is situated. While ethical areas such as, for example, vegetarianism and animal experimentation come up in some of these essays; they do

²² For a representative list see footnote 30.

not form a focal point around which authors gather.²³ In addition, the areas covered are representative, rather than comprehensive, and in this sense the volume can only achieve somewhat limited engagement with different aspects of theological reflection. Furthermore, the wider cultural discussion on animals forms a backdrop to the present discourse, rather than a comprehensive interdisciplinary focus.

This volume finds a context in the burgeoning field of animal studies. Recent examples of this kind of literature²⁴ include due attention to animals in geography, sociology, anthropology, literature as well as philosophy, critical theory, historical and classical studies, religious studies and interdisciplinary texts. Why, one might say, given this ever-growing literature, is the work undertaken by theologians relatively thin on the ground compared with other disciplines? Theologians seem to have been left behind amidst a cultural wave of interest in this

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field. Perhaps there is a residue of guilt left towards animals that theologians do not want to face — yet it makes it its business to discuss issues of guilt and reconciliation. Perhaps some judge concern for human beings should take priority over that for other creatures — yet it is not at all clear that attending to non-human creatures will have deleterious consequences for human beings. Perhaps those who are already locked into attention to anthropocentric issues do not want to move outside the established field — yet, as we have shown here, new insights into theological anthropology are one of the benefits of this kind of research. In any event, this book is an attempt to start the process of mapping out a new approach to animals in such a way that the conversation can continue. We consider that a creaturely approach to theology — doing theology with attention to one's creatureliness — will bear fruit in generating new and persuasive theological insights about relationships between human beings and others of God's creatures. There are plenty of areas left for development, but, as a start in this direction, we hope that others will be encouraged to join in the discussion. If this volume succeeds in this respect, and if it encourages students and others to

²³ A publication that is orientated with this in mind is one edited by Rachel Muers and David Grumett *Eating and Believing: Historical and contemporary perspectives on vegetarianism and theology* (London: Continuum, forthcoming). This book does not, however, deal with animals *per se*, but the practices around human attitudes to animals.

²⁴ We are grateful to Aaron Gross for drawing attention to the importance of referencing this literature and for his assistance in compiling the works listed in the following notes.

think rather more carefully about different dimensions of a theology of God's creatures, then we will have achieved our goal.

Select subject bibliography on animal studies

Geography

Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert, *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations*, vol: Critical Geographies, London: Routledge, 2000.

Jennifer Wolch and Jody Enmel, *Animal Geographies: Place Politics and Identity in the Nature–Culture Borderlands*, London & New York: Verso, 1998.

Sociology

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Eileen Crist, *Images of Animals: Anthropomorphism and Animal Mind*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000.

Adrian Franklin, *Animals and Modern Cultures: A Sociology of Human–Animal Relations in Modernity*, London: Sage, 1999.

Leslie Irvine, *If You Tame Me: Understanding Our Connection with Animals*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004.

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Rebecca Cassidy and Molly Mullin (eds), *Where the Wild Things Are: Domestication Reconsidered*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007.

Claudine Fabre-Vassas, *The Singular Beast: Jews, Christians and the Pig*, vol. *European Perspectives*, trans. Carol Volk, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Tim Ingold, *Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*, London and New York: Routledge, 2005.

Steve Striffler, *Chicken: The Dangerous Transformations of America's Favourite Food*, New Haven and London: Yale, 2005.

Literature

- Erica Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999.
- Alice A. Kuzniar, *Melancholia's Dog: Reflections on Our Animal Kinship*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago, 2006.
- Akira Mizuta Lippit, *The Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife*, Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis, 2000.
- Randy Malamud, *Poetic Animals and Animal Souls*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Philosophy and critical theory

In addition to the Anglo-American philosophy that has already been discussed, we note:

- Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. K. Attell, Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2004.
- Steve Baker, *The Postmodern Animal*, London: Reaktion, 2000.
- Matthew Calarco, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal From Heidegger to Derrida*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- Matthew Calarco and Peter Atterton (eds), *Animal Philosophy: Essential Readings in Continental Thought*, London: Continuum, 2004.
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- Elisabeth De Fontenay, *Le Silence Des Bêtes: La Philosophie À L'épreuve*, Paris: Favard, 1998.
- Jacques Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, trans. David Willis, New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.
- Marc R. Fellenz, *The Moral Menagerie: Philosophy and Animal Rights*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*, Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003.
- Leonard Lawlor, *This Is Not Sufficient: An Essay on Animality and Human*

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Nature in Derrida, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

- M. L. Mallet (ed.), *L'animal Autobiographique: Autour De Jacques Derrida*, Paris: Galilée, 1999.
- H. Peter Steeves (ed.), *Animal Others: On Ethics, Ontology, and Animal Life*, Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1999.
- Gary Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and Its Discontents: The Moral Status of Animals in the History of Western Philosophy*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg Press, 2005.
- Cary Wolfe, *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species and Posthumanist Theory*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Cary Wolfe (ed.), *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Historical and classical studies

- Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005.
- Diane L. Beers, *For the Prevention of Cruelty: The History and Legacy of Animal Rights Activism in the United States*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006.
- Claudine Fabre-Vassas, *The Singular Beast: Jews, Christians and the Pig*, trans. Carol Volk, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
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- Erica Fudge (ed.), *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans, and Other Wonderful Creatures*, Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004.
- Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman, and Early Christian Ideas*, London & New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Katherine C. Grier, *Pets in America: A History*, Chapel Hill NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Kathleen Kete, *The Beast in the Boudoir: Pet-Keeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris*, Berkeley and Los Angeles CA: University of California Press, 1994.
- Mark S. Roberts, *The Mark of the Beast: Animality and Human Oppression*, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2008.

Richard Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals: The Origins of the Western Debate*, Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Gary Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and Its Discontents: The Moral Status of Animals in the History of Western Philosophy*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg Press, 2005.

Tristram Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution: A Cultural History of Vegetarianism from 1600 to Modern Times*, New York: London: W. W. Norton and Co., 2006.

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Religious studies

A large volume that deals with different areas of religious belief and practice is Paul Waldau and Kimberley Patten (eds), *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science and Ethics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. The essays under the subheading Christianity dealt with Bestiaries in heretical medieval writing, a philosophically orientated essay on Descartes, and one highlighting Christian spirituality and animals by Jay McDaniel, who is heavily influenced by process theology, but also absorbs what he claims is a 'Franciscan alternative'. McDaniel largely follows Linzey in his critique of Aquinas, even while engaging with Elisabeth Johnson's neo-Thomist approach. His essay is important inasmuch as he weaves in ecological concerns through the notion of eco-justice. See, 'Practicing the Presence of Animals: A Christian Approach to Animals', pp. 132–45.

Interdisciplinary texts

Animal Studies Group (ed.), *Killing Animals*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006.

J. M. Coetzee (ed.), *The Lives of Animals*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

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Aubrey Manning and James Serpell (eds), *Animals and Human Society: Changing Perspectives*, London: Routledge, 1994.

Nigel Rothfels, *Representing Animals*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.